ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME III

GOALPARA

BY

B. C. ALLEN, C.S.

Calcutta:
PRINTED AT THE CITY PRESS.
12, BENTINCK STREET.

1905.

Price Rs. 3.

PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Goalpara is nothing more than a general description of the district as a whole, and does not, as Gazetteers generally do, include a directory. There are, however, hardly any places in the district which are worthy of the name of town, and the little villages in which the people live do not call for a separate and detailed description. Places which are centres of local trade or of some industry have been specified by name, but to attempt to describe each of these villages would merely have resulted in the most tedious iteration. It should be added that the Gazetteer was compiled at a time when Assam was still a separate Province, and that when the Province is mentioned it is to Assam and not to Eastern Bengal and Assam that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

SHILLONG :
October, 1905.

B. C. ALLEN.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V.

Arts and Industries.

CHAPTER VI.

Economic condition of the people, Communications, Trade, Towns and Local Boards.

CHAPTER VII.

General Administration.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General aspects—Mountain system—River system—Bils and marshes—Geology—Climate—Winds and Cyclones—Rainfall—Earthquakes—Fauna.

Area and boundaries.

THE district of Goalpara is bounded on the north by Bhutan; on the east by Kamrup; on the south by the Garo Hills; and on the west by the Bengal district of Jalpaiguri, by the native state of Kuch Bihar, and by the Bengal district of Rangpur. It lies between 25°, 28′ and 26°, 54′ N. and 89°, 42′ and 91°, 6′ E. and covers an area of 3,954* square miles.

General aspects.

The greater part of Goalpara consists of a level plain, the lower portion of which is intersected by the Brahmaputra. A few outlying spurs of the Assam range project towards the river, and even appear on the north bank, in the Khuntaghat and Parbatjuar parganas. Near the Brahmaputra, much of the country is exposed to flood and is covered by a dense growth of grass and reeds. Further back, the level rises and rice fields take the place of swamps. The houses of the cultivators are buried in dense groves of areca palms, plantains, and bamboos, and at all seasons of the year the country looks fresh and green. The Eastern Duars, at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, is a country of grassy commons

* Revised figures which do not agree with those returned in the Census Report of 1901.

and dark forests. Rice is grown on fields that are irrigated from the hill streams, and here and there the villages of the Meches, the inhabitants of that tract, are to be seen standing up against the sky line. But the Duars are very sparsely populated, and are for the most part covered with jungle grass or forest.

Mountain System

The northern and western portions of the district are absolutely flat. On the east, there are several low ranges projecting from the Garo Hills, which reach right down to the river near Goalpara town, where there are isolated hills projecting above the alluvium from four to seven hundred feet in height. Immediately north of the Brahmaputra, these hills again appear, but they here attain a higher altitude. The Bhairab hill is 1,647 feet above the level of the sea. The Narikola, a little to the east is, 1,146 feet, while the Bao Kumari, the highest peak in a collection of small ranges in the west of the Khuntaghat pargana, is 1,505 feet. The only elevated tract in the Eastern Duars is a low range of hills in the extreme south of the Sidli Duar. These hills all rise sharply from the plain, and, though there are few actual cliffs, their sides are rocky and precipitous. As is only natural in the rainy climate of Assam the summits and sides alike are covered with forest and with bamboo jungle.

River System. The Brahmaputra.

The principal river of Goalpara, as of every other district in the Assam Valley, is the Brahmaputra, which flows either through or along the boundary of the district, for a distance of 85 miles. Few rivers allow

themselves greater latitude in their wanderings than the Brahmaputra, as it oscillates from side to side of the sandy strath through which it makes its way. Here it cuts away a great bank, there it throws up a *chur*, which may either be carried away by the next flood, or may grow into a large island covered with grass and reeds. It enters the district on the south bank a few miles below Nagarbera in Kamrup, and on the north bank at the mouth of the Manas, which is nearly opposite the town of Goalpara. Its course through the district is at first from east to west, but after running about sixty-five miles, it turns to the south-west and finally to the south. The river is crossed by the steam ferries which ply between Dhubri and Fakirganj and Goalpara and Jogighopa. Such is the breadth of the river in the rains that the crossing to Barabhita, about one mile above Fakirganj, takes $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, though the ferry boat can steam some ten miles an hour in slack water.

The Manas and Ai.

The Manas is probably the largest of the rivers which join the Brahmaputra in the Goalpara district. It rises in the Bhutan Hills, and originally formed the boundary between Goalpara and Kamrup, but its channel is subject to frequent changes, and for the greater part of its present course it flows through Goalpara. The principal tributaries are—on the right bank the Makra, Dalani, Ai, Pomajan, Bhandura, and Koija, and on the left bank the Chaulkhoa. The banks are, as a rule, covered with jungle, and the river is not much used as a trade route above its junction with the Ai. Boats of fours tons burthen could, however, go as far as Mokhoa

at all seasons of the year. The total length of the Manas is about 200 miles. The Ai or Gabharu rises in the Bhutan Hills and flows a tortuous course, first south and then south-east, till it falls into the Manas at the extreme north-east corner of the Khuntaghat pargana. It's principal tributaries are the Buri-Ai and Kanamukra, both of which join it on the left bank. A boat of four tons burthen can proceed as far as Koliagaon in the rainy and Chamugaon in the dry season; and the river affords a recognised outlet for rice, mustard, thatching grass, and timber.

The Champamati and Saralbhanga. West of the Manas, the Brahmaputra is joined by the Champamati and the Saralbhanga, which in the lower part of its course takes the name of its principal tributary the Gaurang. Both of these rivers issue from the Bhutan Hills, and when first debouching on the plain, flow over wide stony beds, where the water disappears from time to time in the loose gravelly soil, to re-appear again at some distance further on. In the rainy season the Champamati is navigable by a boat of four tons burthen as far as Garubhasa, and the Saralbhanga as far as Patgaon. The principal tributaries of the Champamati are the Bhoor and the Lopani, both of which join it north of the trunk road. West of the Saralbhanga are the Hail, the Gangia, and the Ranga, which unite to form a stream which, under the name of the Sankosh, falls into the Brahmaputra near Bagribari.

The Sankosh The greater Sankosh is, however, a much larger river, which forms the boundary between the Ripu Duar and

the Jalpaiguri district of Bengal. At Maktaigaon, it divides into two branches. The western arm retains the name of the original river, and, after flowing through Jalpaiguri and Kuch Bihar, rejoins the eastern branch, which is called the Gangadhar, near Patamari. The combined stream is then known as the Dudhkumar, and falls into the Brahmaputra below Dhubri. For the greater part of its course it flows through jungle land, and is thus not largely used as a trade route, though timber and other forest produce is brought down it. The total length of the river is about 200 miles. About four miles south of Tamarhat, it throws off a channel to the east, which is known as the Gadadhar and falls into the Brahmaputra immediately to the east of Dhubri town. These are, however, but the principal rivers north of the Brahmaputra. The whole of the Eastern Duars is a net work of minor streams and water courses, many of which dry up in the cold season.

The rivers on the South bank.

West of Goalpara town the drainage of the Garo Hills is carried to the Brahmaputra by the Karnai, the Phulnai, the Kalpani, the Dudhnai, with it's tributary the Krishnai, and the Jinari. East of Goalpara, the drainage from the south is first collected in the Jinjiram, which rises in the Urpad *bil* and flows parallel to the Brahmaputra till it joins it a little to the south of Mahendraganj. The Jinjiram is largely used as a trade route, and a boat of four tons burthen can go as far as Singimari in the dry season, and in the rains right up to Lakhipur.

Bils and marshes. In the permanently settled portion of the district there are a large number of *bils*, the more considerable of which almost attain the size of lakes. The largest are the Dalni and Tamranga *bils*, which lie at the foot of the Bhairab hills in the Khuntaghat pargana. In the rains, these two *bils* merge into one, and form a magnificent sheet of water from five to six miles long and one or two in breadth. Bounded as they are on the west by a range of precipitous hills about 1,600 feet in height, the appearance of these little lakes is very picturesque. About eight miles further west there is the Dhir *bil*, while the Dhiple *bil*, about three miles further on, is another fine sheet of water, which lies at the foot of the Baokumari hills. South of Goalpara, there is the Urpad *bil*, which almost attains to the dimensions of a lake. Other smaller marshes are the Jaligaur, the Kumaria, the Bakdul, the Digaldubi, the Kishia, the Padmapara, the Kadamtala, and the Hasila.

Geology. The soil of the plains is composed of sand and clay in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to a clay so stiff as to be quite unfit for cultivation. In the Duars, the soil is for the most part light and gravelly. The hills are of gneissic origin and contain large rocks which would make a good building stone.

Climate. The climate of Goalpara, as is only natural, differs considerably from that of Upper Assam. The winter is comparatively warm, and in March and April the temperature is fairly high. In the latter month, the

average maximum is nearly 89°, or over 9° more than it is in Dibrugarh. This is, however, the highest maximum for the year, and in no other month does it exceed 86° Fahrenheit. The diurnal range between May and September is very small, and between July and September it is only 8°, as compared with 21° in January. The maximum and minimum temperature of each month at Dhubri will be found in Table I.

Winds and Cyclones.

The prevailing winds are easterly, but hot winds blow from the west in the months of March, April, and May. On April 18th 1900, a cyclone of extraordinary violence swept over a portion of the south bank. The storm crossed the trunk road at a point 22 miles, south of Fakirganj. The total area affected in the Goalpara district was a strip of land about five miles long by half a mile in width. In the central portion of the storm path, which was about a quarter of a mile broad, practically everything was demolished. 110 houses were wrecked, 88 persons were injured, two of them fatally, and 30 persons and 33 cattle were killed outright. Many of the killed had their skulls smashed in, and two of them were completely torn to pieces. One of the corpses is said to have been blown right across the Jinjiram river, and carried a distance of more than a quarter of a mile. Trees, too, were uprooted and carried away, one being a banyan tree, nineteen feet in circumference and thirty feet high, which was torn up by the roots and carried along ten yards. Phulerchar and Baroalga were the villages which suffered most severely, eighteen persons being killed in the former, and

ten in the latter. On the following day, there was another violent cyclone which lasted for about ten minutes and followed the same line of country. On this occasion the Goalpara villages escaped with comparatively little injury, but eight persons were killed in the neighbouring district of the Garo Hills.

Rainfall. The average monthly rainfall recorded at Dhubri and at four other stations in the district will be found in Table II. At Dhubri it is only 95 inches in the year, but at Kachugaon, near the Bhutan Hills, it is about 60 inches more. Even at Marnai, which is only about 30 miles north of Dhubri, it is 140 inches. About nine tenths of the total rainfall at Dhubri is precipitated in the five months, May to September. In the four months, November to February, there is only just over one inch of rain. The heavy rainfall in May, which varies from 14 to 20 inches in different parts of the district, is a notable feature in the meteorology of Goalpara.

Earth quakes. Goalpara, like the rest of Assam, has always been subject to earthquakes. McCosh, writing in 1837, stated that a few years previously a village near Goalpara town had been completely swallowed up.* Such was the story told by the people of the neighbourhood, but for its accuracy few would care to vouch. All previous seismic disturbances were, however, insignificant in comparison with the great earthquake of 1897. This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon in the

* Topography of Assam page 74.

south-east to Kangra in the north-west, from the Himalayas to Masulipatam, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles.* The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country, of the shape of a cocked hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintiapur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The shock occurred at about 5 P.M. on June 12th 1897, and lasted for several minutes. Most of the masonry buildings in the district were wrecked, but *cutcha* structures escaped with comparatively little damage. In Goalpara, the Subdivisional Officer's bungalow, the circuit house, the treasury, the school, and the post and telegraph offices were all demolished The bazar sank, and the whole of the town went under water; the people being compelled to live like birds on bamboo platforms erected near the roofs of their houses. Substantial dykes have since been constructed, and the town is now protected from inundation in the rains. Serious injury was done to all masonry buildings at Dhubri. The foreshore was broken up by enormous fissures, wells were cracked and filled up with sand, and sand and water spouted from the earth. Fortunately the loss of life was very small, and the total number of casualties was only five. The following extract from a letter written by the Civil Surgeon, gives a graphic description of the effects of the shock south of the Brahmaputra.

At 5 p. m. came this terrible earthquake. I invariably sit out an earthquake, as I have always thought the worst is over before one has time to get outside a house, but though I was safe

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. xxix, p. 52.

enough in the light shanty I was in, I had to rise, as the shock seemed never ending, and a roar of water flowing near and the hum of voices compelled my getting up. The villagers were panic-stricken and fleeing from their houses to the Trunk Road. The ground I at once saw was everywhere cracked up, sunk, etc. Behind the old rest-house is the termination of a very long *bheel*. It was a wonderful sight, this *bheel*. The water rose steadily in it, and in two minutes must have risen at least twelve feet and then overflowed, and with this overflow, the whole country, as far as the eye could see on each side of the Trunk Road, was one sheet of water. The fact being that from all the innumerable cracks water had gone on spouting, and that, coincidentally with the overflow of this *bheel*, the water level had risen to the same height all over the surrounding country.

In addition to the cracks from which the water welled up carrying the sand with it, innumerable jets of water, like fountains playing, spouted up to heights varying from 18 inches to quite 3½ or 4 feet. Wherever this had occurred, the land was afterwards seen to occupy a sandy circle with a depression in its centre. These circles ranged from 2 to 6 and 8 feet in diameter, and were to be seen all over the country. In some places, several were quite close together; in others they were at a distance of several yards apart. They had the appearance of small craters. I have heard it said that the water from the cracks and these so-called fountains was warm, almost hot, but this must be due to someone's imagination: I had to wade through a good deal of water whilst the water level was rising, and had the temperature of the water been abnormal, it must have made itself felt to me. It must not be overlooked that the country had been water-logged days before the earthquake came, and that it must have been this water which was driven up with the subsidence of the land, as I believe the quake was due to a subsidence.

In front of Jemadarhat rest-house the Garo Hills, are within 5 miles, and behind it is the Brahmaputra at a distance of not more than 2 miles. The Trunk Road remained above water, but in certain portions where it had subsided from 1 to 2 feet the water flowed across it, and at these places, where the panic-stricken villagers tried to run towards the direction of Lakhipur, which is 12 miles off in the Gauhati direction, the poor creatures got more alarmed than ever, for they found themselves sprawling about in the water, unable to realise what had barred their progress, and not knowing if they were going to get out of it again. At all these gaps or places, where the earth had subsided, or where fissures and cracks had formed, the rush of water from

them all carried with it an immense quantity of sand, and this was what barred the progress of these panic-stricken villagers. This sand had a particularly quicksandish feel about it, but fortunately, as a rule, was not deep on the portions of the road that had subsided near the rest-house.

The main shock seemed to me to have lasted nearly six minutes, but perhaps in this I am wrong, and perhaps I may have missed a cessation and taken two or more shocks as one, for certainly I noticed no cessation. It seemed as though death from drowning must have been the end of every one near me. Although the shocks went on being repeated incessantly at intervals of a few minutes, the rise in the water ceased after half an hour, and then the idea present to one's eye was that the country on either side of the road was nothing more than innumerable sand-*churs* of different sizes, such as are met with in the Brahmaputra. This meant, of course, that crops were considerably covered by this sand. Most of the excavations made by the earth-cutters annually on each side of the Trunk Road to enable them to throw fresh earth on to it have been filled in by this sand, and the Public Works Department will not have quite such heavy rates to pay for earth-cutting, as the leads will be comparatively short when they begin work again; but for this, which is really no advantage to speak of, the loss to the province must be enormous.

All the panic subsided by about 9 o'clock; the hut I was originally in was now under water, and I could not get back to it. Many of the villagers' houses and those of the Kayas had sunk a good deal, whilst others filled with two or more feet of sand through the door ways. My horse broke away towards the end of the first shocks, and made for home, the *syce* after her as hard as he could go, but on reaching a good strong wooden bridge, she was stopped by the bridge subsiding on the Dhubri side. Cattle seemed to find great trouble in extricating themselves from the sand and water, which but a few minutes before was their grazing ground. Villages were wholly vacated and refuge taken wherever high land was available. Almost everything is said to have its ludicrous side, and in the midst of confusion and the marked panic of the villagers, it was amusing to find my cook busy at work preparing dinner within half an hour of the occurrence. There he was, as though nothing had occurred, on the plinth of a burnt down hut only just above water and surrounded on all sides by it. I was very grateful to him later on for not having parted with his wits.

As the rush of water ceased and order was to some small extent renewed, those who were able to do so scrambled to their

huts, and brought out boxes and bedding, etc., etc , and, with their belongings, encamped on the road for the night. At about 10 it struck me I might have a roof over my head if I got near the ferryghât, as there was a tumble-down serai there. I had gone half a mile when two men assured me it was impossible for me to progress, owing to a gap of several feet in the road through which water flowed, and across which they had just swum. On hearing this, I returned, and with my bed on the road, attempted to get some rest This was impossible, with the continuous and oft-repeated seismic shocks at short intervals, which, whenever the least bit strong, were followed by a wail of human voices. Cattle, goats, and dogs formed a goodly addition to those resting on the road for the night. At 2 a. m. a sharp drizzle came down, and with my umbrella over my face and a rug over my body, I weathered it out till 3 a. m., when my rug had got wet through. Close by was the rest-house well. I now transferred my headquarters to it by wading across 2 feet of water for about 15 yards, and then spread a dryish rug on the masonry platform of this well. The well and its platform had both been badly cracked at 5 p. m., and the water had risen to within 18 inches of the surface. It had a thatched covering over it, and this sheltered me during two hours of heavy rain.

At 5 a.m. I rose finally, having had a fair night's rest under most extraordinary circumstances. Having had *chota hazree* at 6, I started to walk back to the ghât, having learnt that the road was impassable towards Lakhipur. As the road was heavy and my *syce* had developed strong fever, I left him the trap to drive in slowly. The whole Trunk Road from Jemadarhat to the ferryghât, which I had seen, had cracks running along it, which were in some instances over 100 feet long ; in others the earth had subsided for a similar distance, and then, again, traverse cracks, depressions, etc., existed all along the road, at distances of a few feet for miles ; the same thing seemed to have occurred off the road side. The villagers stated that they had lost the grain they had stored in their houses. On arrival at the ghât, it is scarcely necessary to say it was much changed, the river having risen considerably since 4 p.m. However, after getting almost knee-deep in many places in very disagreeable soft sand, about which I was hopping for quite half an hour, I got safe on to the ferry, and returned to Dhubri at 9 a.m. Shortly before reaching the ferry-ghât, my *syce* had sent word that my horse was drowned, and desired me to return. At the ghât another messenger brought me word saying the animal was well stuck in soft sand. So I sent back coolies, and, much to my surprise, found her none the

worse, and at Dhubri by 5 p.m. It seems she had got into the sand at about 7 a.m., and remained in it till 1 p.m. There were several gaps in the road between Jemadarhat and the ferry-ghât, but none over 2 feet wide, and the *syce*, instead of exercizing a little care when having to go off the road, took the shortest cut possible, with the result noted by me. The huge gap I was told of the night before turned out to be a myth.

On returning to Dhubri, everything was as I had pictured it at 5 p.m. the previous night. The town is in ruins. It has sunk everywhere, and for hundreds of feet in a stretch it is cracked and fissured. The dispensary (main building) stands, but has suffered much. It is built on iron pillars, and its brick walls are only about 12 feet high and 2 feet thick; above, its walls are lath and plaster. Hence the reason it has stood. The cutcherry, the forest house, Local Board bungalow, circuit house, the club, telegraph office and telegraph signallers, quarters, and the Gauripur zamindars' house stand, also Leslie's and Maher's, because they are built on piles. Of course, the plaster and lath are all gone. The treasury, Jewett's house, Jolly's house, the dâk bungalow, the Bijni Hall, two large houses at the immigration depôts, the liquor shop in the bazar, and the Muhammadan *musjid* and my house still stand, but are dangerous to enter and must all be dismantled. The post office, Hallifax's, Bogribari zamindar's house, the high school, the church, the Sikh temple, the new jail, the newly-built magazine, the seven newly-built houses in the dispensary ground, and all the out-houses of every single brick-built house are down flat. So far, only one fatal case has been reported, and this a native child about 5 years of age. The natives are all panic-stricken, are living on the roads, in boats, and in steamer flats, and seem most helpless; the better classes encamp out on the roads during the night, although several of their houses are safe. Several of them have, however, suffered considerably; houses, especially those built on new reclaimed land near the Dhubri back water, have subsided a good deal towards the back.

Wild animals used at one time to be numerous, but they are rapidly decreasing in numbers. They include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*) buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig and five kinds of deer, *viz*., the barasingha or swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*), the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*) the rib-faced or barking **Fauna.**

deer (*cervulus muntjac*), the sambar (*cervus unicolor*) and the spotted deer (*cervus axis.*)

The rhinoceros is extinct on the south bank and very nearly so on the north. Buffalo are reduced to a few small and scattered herds. The spotted deer are rare and the swamp deer becoming so. On the other hand bison are slowly increasing (owing to the spread of Hinduism), while tigers are common and leopards are plentiful.

Elephants are fairly common on both banks of the Brahmaputra, especially near the hills, and when the crops are ripening the solitary males occasionally do considerable damage. For the purpose of elephant catching the temporarily settled portions of the district are divided into two *mahals* or tracts. The right to hunt in each mahal is sold by auction, and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. Three men are usually mounted on each elephant, their only hold being a couple of ropes passing round the animals neck and under its tail. One of the men guides the elephant, the other wields the noose, while the third uses a spiked mallet as a spur. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the

boughs of an over hanging tree. After a time, the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and, as they close in on either side of the captured animal, it is unable to escape or to do much injury to its captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. Fifty animals were caught in 1903-04, the last year in which the *mahals* were sold by the Deputy Commissioner.

Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards, and bears are met with in almost every part of the district. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but, in 1903, are said to have accounted for over 1,300 head of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows:—elephant 2, tigers 5, leopard 1, bears 2, wild buffaloes 2, snakes 32, total 44. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 57 tigers, 133 leopards, and 7 bears. Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*sypheotis bengalensis*), black and marsh partridge, jungle fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*) pheasants, and hares. Peafowl are also occasionallv seen in the north of the district.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Summary—Legendary History—The Koch Kings—Their decline—Invasion of Goalpara by Ahoms—Conquest by the Muhammadans—Relations between British and Ahoms—The Eastern Duars—The Garo frontier—Changes in Jurisdiction—Archaelogy.

Summary. The Goalpara district has never been a separate political entity under its own king, and its history has to be considered in connection with that of the various states of which, from time to time, it formed a part. It was originally included in the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kamarupa, which is mentioned in the Mahabharata, and which at one time occupied North Eastern Bengal and a great part of what is now known as the Province of Assam. The history of this kingdom, dating, as it presumably does, from about the twelfth century B. C., is largely a matter of doubtful and fragmentary tradition. About the twelfth century A. D., Goalpara is said to have been conquered, first by the Sen, and then by the Pal kings of Bengal, but there are practically no records of the period of their occupation. According to the traditions of the Mahapurushias, it subsequently formed part of a kingdom called Kamata, whose ruler at the beginning of the fourteenth century was named Durlabh Narayan. In the fifteenth century the district was included in the

dominions of the Khyen princes, whose capital Kamatapur, the modern Lal Bazar in the Kuch Bihar State, was sacked by the Muhammadans in 1498 A. D. A few years afterwards it passed into the hands of the Koch kings who also established their capital in Kuch Bihar. About 1580 A. D., the Koch kingdom was divided, and the country east of the Sankosh, which included Goalpara, Kamrup, and Darrang was surrendered to Raghu Rai, the nephew of Nar Narayan; while the territory that lay west of that river was reserved for the son of that prince. Disputes, however, soon broke out between the two families, and Goalpara was conquered by the Muhammadans, who had been called in by Nar Narayan's son to his assistance. The aid of the Ahoms was invoked on the other side, and for some years the war between these two powers dragged on with varying results. In 1637, peace was concluded, and the Barnadi, which now divides Kamrup from Darrang, was fixed as the boundary between Muhammadan and Ahom territory. In 1658, the Ahoms advanced again, occupied Goalpara, and held it for three years, but were compelled to retreat before Mir Jumla's army. From that time onwards the district formed part of the Muhammadan dominions, till, with the rest of Bengal, it was ceded to the British in 1765 A. D.

The kingdom of Kamarupa. 1200 B.C.-1000 A. D.

According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the kingdom of Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river, on the western boundaries of Rangpur, to the Dikrai, in the east of the Darrang district.* It was divided into four portions,

* The principal authority for the history of Kamarupa, and the Khyen and Koch Kings is an interesting paper on the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E A Gait, C. S., published in J. A. S. B., Vol LXII, Part I, No. 4, 1893.

i. e., Kamapith, from the Karatoya to the Sankosh, Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, which included therefore the present district of Goalpara; Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli; and Saumarpith from the Bhareli to the Dikrai. The earliest king of Kamarupa, of whom anything in particular is recorded, is Narak, who is said to have been the son of the earth by Vishnu, and who defeated and slew his predecessor Ghatak. He established his capital at Pragjyotishpura, the modern Gauhati, and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though some what headstrong, prince.

He was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as fighting on the side of the Kauravas, at the great battle of Kurukshetra; and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ, Goalpara formed part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan princes.

Practically nothing is known of the history of the district for the next 2,000 years. The dynasty of Narak was displaced by foreign invaders, and after many generations was restored again. A line of powerful and civilized Pala Kings flourished in Central Assam about the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D., but whether Goalpara was included in their territories or not it would be difficult to say. At the begining of the fifteenth century we reach more certain ground.

The Khyen Kings 15th century A. D.

A Khyen of humble origin, who is said to have been the cowherd of a Brahman, succeeded in deposing the local king and founded a capital at Kamatapur in the

south of the Kuch Bihar State, near the modern village of Lal Bazar. The ruins of this city still exist and, when visited by Buchanan Hamilton in 1809 A. D., were said to be nineteen miles in circumference.

This Khyen assumed the name of Niladwaj, and was succeeded by his son Chakradwaj, who in his turn handed on the sceptre to his son Nilambar. Nilambar was a powerful prince and is said to have reigned over Rangpur, Goalpara, and part of Kamrup, but in 1498 A. D., his capital was taken by the Muhammadans under Husain Shah. The Muhammadans are said to have been invited into the country by Nilambar's minister, who disclosed to them its intrinsic weakness. This man had been embittered by the savage conduct of his royal master. The Raja suspected the minister's son of tampering with one of the queens, and had the young man killed, and his flesh served up to his father at a banquet. After the poor wretch had eaten freely of the dish, its horrid nature was disclosed to him. The minister then left the capital, ostensibly to do penance for the dreadful act he had unwittingly committed, but in reality to seek the means of vengeance.

The seige of Kamatapur is said to have lasted several years, and the town was finally taken by stratagem. The Muhammadan general anounced that he was about to retire, but asked that, before he did so, his wife might be allowed to visit Nilambar's queen. The request was granted, and a number of closely veiled litters were introduced within the city walls. But it was soldiers and not women that the litter curtains hid, and

the gates were quickly thrown open to the advancing Moslems. Nilambar was placed in an iron cage to be taken to Gaur, but on the way he succeeded in making his escape; and Buchanan Hamilton reports that even in his time the common people of Kamarupa still looked for his restoration at some future date.

After the fall of Kamatapur the Muhammadans endeavoured to extend their conquests up the valley of the Brahmaputra, but they were repulsed by the Ahoms, and Nilambar's former kingdom was split up into a number of petty principalities.

The Koch Kings. Viswa Singh 1509-1534 A. D.

In the midst of this confusion and anarchy a new family rose to power. The founder of the line was a Mech named Viswa Singh, who, according to tradition, was the son of Hira, the wife of one Haria Mandal, by Siva, who assumed the shape of her husband, and thus induced her to admit him to her embraces. Viswa Singh subdued the petty princes who surrounded him, founded a magnificent city in Kuch Bihar, and reduced his state to order. The whole population was divided up into different corps under officers of increasing dignity; a thakuria being appointed over every 20 coolies, a saikia over every 100, a hazari over 1,000, an umra over 3,000 and a nawab over 66,000. He took a census of his subjects and found that the number capable of bearing arms was 5,225,000, an obvious exaggeration. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat; but the Ahom version, which states that he was defeated and made tributary,

seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition.

Nar Narayan 1534-1584 A.D.

Viswa Singh died after a reign of 25 years, and was succeeded in 1534 A. D., by his son Malla Deva, who assumed the name of Nar Narayan. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladwaj or Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He first attacked the Ahoms, but mindful of his father's failure, commenced operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it. The work was entrusted to his brother Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which is still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala Ali to the present day. Nar Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon, (the modern Nazira) and did not leave till he had received the submission of the Ahom king. The Rajas of Cachar and Manipur were then reduced to the state of feudatary chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, Tippera, and Sylhet conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaur. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself made prisoner. Nar Narayan declined, however, to accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaur. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaur was divided between the Emperor of Delhi and the Koch king.

Decline of Koch kingdom Raghu Rai 1581-1593. Within the space of two generations, the Koch kingdom had attained to an extraordinary height of power and prosperity, but its decline was as rapid as its rise. For a long time Nar Narayan had no male offspring, and Silarai's son, Raghu Rai, was regarded as his heir. When this boy was approaching manhood, one of his uncle's wives gave birth to a son called Lakshmi Narayan; and Raghu Rai, realising that he had now no hope of succeeding to the throne, withdrew from the capital to Barnagar in the Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup. Nar Narayan endeavoured to compel him to return, but his soldiers were defeated and the king weakly resolved to divide his kingdom.* The territory east of the Sankosh was made over to Raghu Rai, while Lakshmi Narayan received the part that lay west of that river. Raghu Rai continued to reside at Barnagar, and seems to have been much devoted to religious exercises.

Parikshit 1593-1614. He was succeeded by his son Parikshit in 1593 A. D., who built a town at North Gauhati, and mounted cannon at Pandunath. War then broke out between Parikshit and his cousin Lakshmi Narayan.† The latter was defeated but called in the Muhammadans to his aid, and on their arrival the situation was reversed.

* According to Buchanan Hamilton, the kingdom was founded by Hajo, father of Hira, and grandfather of Viswa Singh, and divided by Viswa Singh who allotted the portion east of the Sankosh to Sukladwaj or Silarai, and that west of the river to Nar Narayan. On general grounds, however, this acount seems to be less probable than that given in the body of the text.

† According to one authority, the quarrel dated from the time of Raghu Rai who declined to pay tribute after Nar Narayan's death.

Mukarram Khan advanced with 6,000 horse, 12,000 foot, and 500 ships, and took Parikshit's fort at Dhubri. The Koch king then essayed a naval engagement on the Gadadhar river, but was defeated and retreated to Barnagar near Barpeta where he surrendered in 1614 A. D., and was sent to the Court of the Mughal Emperor.*

Bali Narayan. 1614-1637.

His brother Bali Narayan, or Baldeo as he is called by the Muhammadan historians, fled to the Ahoms, and the struggle between these two powers continued for some years with varying success. The Musalmans penetrated as far as Bishnath, but their career of conquest was then checked by a crushing defeat. They retained, however, their hold upon Goalpara, and, in the hostilities that subsequently took place, much of the fighting seems to have been in the neighbourhood of Gauhati, near Pandughat. Parikshit's son, Chandra Narayan, who had established himself with a strong force at Karaibari was defeated and killed; and Bali Narayan, who had erected a fort at Jogighopa on the eastern frontier of the Goalpara district, was driven across the Manas. The following year he was completely routed and he shortly afterwards died at Singri in Darrang (1637 A. D.) The Muhammadans took the forts at Pandu and Srighat, and the Barnadi, which divides the modern districts of Kamrup and Darrang, was made the boundary between Muhammadan and Ahom territory.

* An account of this struggle will be found in a paper by Professor Blochmann in J. A. S. B., Vol. XLI, Part I, No. 1, 1872, page 49.

Ahoms seize Goalpara in 1658. A. D.

Twenty years later, Pran Narayan, who was at that time ruler of that part of the Koch kingdom which lay west of the Sankosh, took advantage of the confusion that occurred on the deposition of Shah Jahan to attack the Muhammadan governor of Goalpara. This officer retreated to Gauhati, but was expelled by the Ahoms, who then advanced down the valley of the Brahmaputra, seized Goalpara, and drove Pran Narayan with his army beyond the Sankosh.

Reconquered by Muhammadans in 1661.

For three years Goalpara remained in the hands of the Ahoms, but in 1661 A. D. Mir Jumla started on the invasion of Assam. He defeated Pran Narayan, and marched up the south bank of the Brahmaputra till he occupied Gargaon (Nazira). The rains then set in with unusual severity, supplies were very scarce, and the camp of the invaders was ravaged by disease. Early in the cold weather, a treaty was patched up and Mir Jumla retreated to Bengal, though he died on the river before reaching Dacca. Two years later the Ahoms were again in possession of Kamrup, but the advanced guard of the Mughals remained at Rangamati on the banks of the Manas; and Goalpara continued under Muhammadan rule till 1765, when, with the rest of Bengal, it passed into the possession of the East India Company.

Relations between British and Ahoms.

Prior to 1825, the year in which the Burmese were expelled from the Brahmaputra valley, Goalpara town and Jogighopa, a village lying opposite to it on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, were the frontier outposts from which trade was carried on with the Assamese. Colonies of Europeans settled here, who forcibly seized a

monopoly of the export trade of Bengal. A similar monopoly of the Assam trade was enjoyed by two Brahmans, who held a farm of the Ahom custom house, and business was carried on between these two communities to their mutual profit. The principal articles of export from Assam were lac, silk, cotton, and mustard seed, the chief import salt. After Captain Welsh's expedition in 1792, these monopolies were abolished, but the times were not ripe for free trade. According to Buchanan Hamilton, the immediate result was a great decrease in the volume of business done, as little reliance could be placed on the good faith of the individual merchants. The remains of this European colony are still to be seen in the shape of four nameless tombs at Jogighopa, which is now but a tiny village. It was from Goalpara, too, that the first attempt was made by a British subject to intervene in the affairs of Assam. In 1788, a salt farmer of that place, named Raush, sent a body of barkandazes to assist the Ahom Raja, who had been driven from his throne by the rebel Moamarias. The barkandazes were, however, cut up to a man, and the Raja was compelled to apply to the Governor-General for aid. The expedition of Captain Welsh in 1792 and the subsequent conquest of Assam in 1825, form, however, no part of the history of Goalpara.

The Eastern Duars.

The history of the Eastern Duars, a strip of country lying at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, differs in some respects from that of the remainder of the district. According to the Vamsavali, a chronicle in the possession of the Darrang branch of the Koch family, which

was compiled about 1806 A. D., Nara Singha, son of Viswa Singh, and brother of Nar Narayan, became ruler of Bhutan.* In this there is nothing intrinsically improbable. Mr. Ashley Eden, in his Report on his mission to Bhutan, states that the Bhutias have apparently not been in possession of Bhutan for more than two centuries; and that it formerly belonged to a tribe called by the Bhutias Tephu, who are generally believed to have been natives of Kuch Bihar. These Tephus were subsequently driven down into the plains by some Tibetan soldiers, who had been sent from Lhassa to enquire into the resource of the country.† On the break up of the Koch power at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and during the struggles that ensued between the Muhammadans and Ahoms, the Bhutias succeeded in bringing the territory now known as the Eastern Duars under their control. Their system of administration seems to have been harsh and arbitrary. Mr. Mills, in his report on the Goalpara district in 1853, states that raiyats were constantly moving from the Eastern Duars into British territory to escape the exactions and oppressions of the Bhutia Zamindars.‡ The hill-men did not, however, confine their attentions to their own people, and repeated outrages and aggressions were committed on the property and persons of our subjects. Notwithstanding numerous remonstrances and threats, scarcely a year passed without the occurrence

* Vide the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., page 24.

† Po'itical mission to Bhutan, p. 108.

‡ Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Calcutta, 1854 Goalpara, p. 2.

of several raids into British territory, in which the villagers were plundered and killed, or carried off as slaves. In the cold weather of 1863, Mr. Ashley Eden was sent on a mission to Bhutan to remonstrate with the Government of that state. But instead of meeting with apologies and promises of amendment, the envoy was subjected to the grossest insults. On his return to British territory, the Bhutan Rajas were informed that, unless the fullest reparation was afforded, Government would be compelled to make good their demands by force. This solemn warning was completely disregarded, and in 1864, Government formally annexed the Bhutan Duars and occupied them with a military force. The Bhutias offered but a feeble resistence, and a treaty of peace was concluded in November 1865 under which Government undertook to make a yearly payment of Rs. 25,000 rising to Rs. 50,000 as a species of quit rent for the Duars, on condition that the hill men continued to be of good behaviour.

The Garo frontier. It was not, however, only on the northern frontier that the tribes inhabiting the hills molested the inhabitants of the plains. The mountains to the south were occupied by the Garos, a section of the great Bodo race, who were probably driven southwards from the plains by the kings of Kuch Bihar.

The earliest notices of the Garos describe them as being in a state of intermittent conflict with the zamindars of the large estates lying at the foot of the hills. The exactions levied by the subordinates of these persons irritated the hill-men, and the belief that

the spirits of their headmen required the souls of others to attend them in the next world, acted as a further incitement to the despatch of raiding parties. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Garos inhabiting the outer ranges had been brought to some extent under the authority of the zamindars, but the villages in the interior were entirely independent. Steps were then taken by Government to release the tributary Garos from the control of the Bengali landlords, and it was hoped that by this means the practice of raiding would be stopped. It was difficult, however, to put down all oppression, and the hill men continued to be turbulent. In 1848, an expedition was sent into the hills to punish the Dasanni Garos for having murdered one of their headmen, with all his family, because he attempted to collect the tribute due by them to government. In 1852, seven Garo raids took place in which 44 persons were killed. A blockade was established along the frontier, which produced some effect, but, in 1856, the tribes broke out again and a succession of forays was made upon the plains. Between May 1857 and October 1859, nine raids were made into Goalpara, and 20 heads taken. An expedition was despatched into the hills in 1861, the effects of which lasted for a few years; but, in 1866, a most murderous raid was committed on the Mymensingh district, and it was decided to establish a British officer in the hills. The success with which this experiment was attended was very striking. Raids at once ceased, and since that date the southern frontier of the district has been undisturbed. A full account of the Garo troubles will

be found in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Mackenzie, pages (245-261.)

Changes in jurisdiction.

Goalpara has experienced several changes of jurisdiction since first it came under British rule. The permanently settled portion was originally part of the district of Rangpur. In 1822, it was formed into a separate district known as North-East Rangpur, which, together with the Garo Hills frontier, was placed in charge of Mr. David Scott, one of the first and the greatest of our administrators on the north-east frontier. After the cession of Assam in 1826, Goalpara was annexed to the Assam Valley division, but in 1867 was transferred to the newly created Kuch Bihar Commissionership. In the following year it was placed for judicial purposes under the Judicial Commissioner of Assam; and it was finally incorporated in the new Province, when Assam was erected into a separate administration in 1874. The headquarters of the district were originally fixed at Goalpara, but were transferred to Dhubri in 1879. It was at that time thought that the railway would soon be extended to the town, an event which did not take place till more than twenty years later, and it was considered to be the most convenient centre for the supervision of the overland route of immigration to the Province. Other arguments put forward were the facilities afforded for forest and land revenue administration, and the fact that Dhubri was a growing place and Goalpara a decaying one. Most of these arguments have been hardly justified by subsequent events.

Owing to the erosive action of the river, the growth of Dhubri has received a serious check, and it is still a much smaller town than Goalpara.

Archaeology. In the previous pages, it has been shown that Goalpara, though forming a portion of several powerful kingdoms, has generally been an outlying or frontier district, and has never contained the capital of the king to whom it owned allegiance. The result is that there are hardly any archæological remains of interest within its boundaries. At Rangamati, about six miles north-east of Gauripur town, there is a mosque which is said to have been built in 1687 A.D. Other remains which are situated on the hill are a masonry enclosure, in which a tiger is said to have been confined, and an *idgarh*, or place of prayer, with a deep well. The hill is now covered with thick jungle, but in the time of the Mughals it was the headquarters of the Imperial faujdar. Near Krishnai, there was a temple to Tukreswari which enjoyed some local repute. It was wrecked by the earthquake of 1897, and is now (1905) under reconstruction. Near North Salmara, there are the remains of extensive earthworks, about one mile in circumference, which are known as Ram Raja's garh. At Jogighopa, there are small caves in the rocky cliffs overhanging the Brahmaputra, which are said to have been sanctified by the various ascetics who from time to time have lived there. The hillock at Dhubri is said to have been artificially constructed in 1665 A. D., by the Mughal army, under the orders of Guru Tez Bahadur, the famous Sikh.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Area and Density—Towns and Villages—Growth of Population—Migration—Sex and Marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste and Tribe—Religion—Hindu Sects—Temples and Dhams—Animism—Muhammadanism—Christianity—Other religions—Occupations.

The total area of the district is 3,954 square miles, the population in 1901 was 462,052, and the density was thus 117 to the square mile. **Area and density.**

The district contains two small towns, Dhubri and Goalpara, and 1,461 villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betel nut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. Except in the Eastern Duars, **Towns and villages.**

it is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance. Taking them, however, for what they are worth, it appears that villages as a rule run small, and in 1901 nearly half the total population were living in hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

Growth of population.

1872	387,311
1881	446,700
1891	452,773
1901	462,052

The earliest estimate of the population on record is one submitted in 1853 to Mr. Moffatt Mills by the Deputy Collector in charge of the *thakbast* survey. The Eastern Duars at that time formed part of Bhutan, and the population of the remainder of the district was said to be 141,638 souls. The first regular census was taken in 1872, and the figures in the margin show that the earlier estimate was probably too low. It is true that the Eastern Duars had been added in 1864, but the population of this tract in 1901 was only 72,072. The census of 1872 was admittedly incomplete, and the growth of the population can only be measured with any degree of accuracy from 1881. The total increase during the next twenty years only amounted to 3 per cent.

The best test of natural growth is, however, to be found in the tables of birth place. From these it appears that the number of persons born in Goalpara and censused in the Province in 1901, was some 12,000 more than the number so returned in 1891, but a few hundreds less than the figure for 1881. This complete

absence of natural growth is largely due to the ravages of *kala azar*, to which reference will be made in a subsequent chapter, but even apart from the effects of this dread disease, there seems to be something in the district unfavourable to a rapid expansion of the population. This was the view taken by Mr. Moffatt Mills in 1853. "Mr. Bedford, however, informs me, that notwithstanding this influx of settlers, he does not think the population is on the increase, in consequence of the great mortality annually caused by cholera and small pox. He says, mangoe topes, sooparie trees, and hamlets are to be seen deserted in some parts, the inhabitants having been carried off by these scourges, while in other parts land is being reclaimed and new villages are springing up."* It is impossible at present to draw any definite conclusions as since 1881, the first year for which reliable figures are available, a special cause of high mortality, in the shape of *kala azar*, has been in operation in Lower and Central Assam. It is, however, significant that the population of Kuch Bihar, which adjoins Goalpara on the west, decreased by nearly 4 per cent. between 1881 and 1891, and by 2 per cent. in the next decade. In Rangpur too, another neighbouring district, there was no growth of population between 1872 and 1901, and, though of recent years the public health has been improving, the natural growth during the last decade was only about 1 per cent. The Terai at the foot of the Bhutan and Garo Hills is un-

* Report on the Province of Assam, by A. J. Moffatt Mills. Calcutta 1854. Goalpara, p. 2.

doubtedly unhealthy. Infant marriage too, which is extremely prevalent in Goalpara, is certainly not a factor which conduces to a rapid growth of population.

Variation by subdivisions

From Table IV in the Appendix it will be seen that while the population of the Dhubri subdivision increased by 47,000 during the last twenty years of the century, the population of Goalpara declined by 31,000. It would not, however, be safe to infer that Goalpara alone is unhealthy, while Dhubri is flourishing and progressive. *Kala azar* is said to have been most virulent at the foot of the Garo Hills, and that may have had something to do with the decrease in the Goalpara subdivision. Migration is, however, another important factor, and most of the emigration from the district is believed to go from the southern while most of the immigration is to the northern subdivision. There is probably also migration from Goalpara to Dhubri to which the census figures give no clue.

Migration.

The tea industry, which is the principal cause of immigration to other districts of Assam, is of no importance in Goalpara; but, situated as it is on the confines of the Province, it receives a considerable number of foreigners, and 9 per cent. of the population censused there in 1901 had been born outside Assam. The immigrants from Bengal numbered 33,803 or about six sevenths of the total. Nearly half of these Bengalis came from the neighbouring district of Rangpur, and almost all these natives of Rangpur were censused in the Dhubri subdivision. The number of emigrants to Bengal is, on the other hand, comparatively small. In

1901, only 5,412 persons born in Assam, the great bulk of whom came no doubt from Goalpara, were censused in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, and Kuch Bihár. The other Provinces and States from which there were a considerable number of immigrants were the United Provinces, Rajputana, and Nepal.

In 1901, there was a net loss to Goalpara of 7,293 persons from inter-district migration within the Province. A considerable number of people cross the border into the plains portion of the Garo Hills. Against this must be set the northward movement from the hills, but the net loss to Goalpara was nearly 6,000 souls. On the other hand, in its transactions with Kamrup, the district gained about 2,500 persons, the earthquake having seriously interfered with cultivation in the neighbourhood of Barpeta. In 1901, there were less than 4,500 natives of Goalpara who had emigrated to districts in the Province other than these two. Nearly 1,500 of these persons were censused on the tea gardens.

Sex and marriage.

The proportion of women to men is lower in Goalpara than in any other district of the Province, with the exception of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The proportion has moreover a steady tendency to decrease.* The deficiency of women is partly due to immigration, men amongst the immigrant population largely exceeding the women in numbers. It is also partly due to a deficiency of women amongst the natives of the district. This deficiency is almost entirely due to the Hindus and Muhammadans, as amongst the animistic tribes, who

* Number of women to 1,000 men :—1881, 947 ; 1891, 911 ; 1901, 903.

form more than one-fourth of the total population, the women slightly exceed the men in numbers. It is a significant fact that in Goalpara the followers of both of these religions marry their girls at a much earlier age than is usually the custom in Assam. There can be little doubt that this custom is prejudicial to female life, and in the Report on the Census of India for 1901 it is shewn that the proportion of girls at the age of 10-15 varies inversely with the number who are married at this period.* How marked is the difference between the customs of Goalpara and Assam Proper † with regard to the age of marriage, will be seen from the following abstract, which shows the percentage of Hindu girls at certain ages, who have performed the marriage ceremony, out of the total number living at that age.

Age.	Percentage of girls married and widowed.	
	Goalpara.	Assam Proper
0-10 ...	... 4·8 ...	... 0·8
10-15 ...	... 62·4 ...	... 15·1
	Unmarried.	
15-20 ...	... 7·2 ...	... 38·7

In Assam Proper, it is quite the exception for marriage to take place before the age of puberty, but in this respect Goalpara unfortunately conforms to the customs of Bengal. The figures quoted refer only to Hindus, but the Muhammadans of the district are, if anything, still more addicted to the practice. Even the animistic tribes marry earlier than is usual in Assam.

* P. 118.

† Assam Proper consists of the five upper districts of the Assam Valley, *i.e.*, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

The usual form of marriage amongst Hindus is the full *hompura* rite, which is described on page 63 of the Report on the Assam Census of 1901. The practice of taking a bride price is almost universal, even Brahmans receiving money for their daughters. The price asked for the girl depends to a great extent on the resources of the purchaser, and varies from Rs. 20 to Rs. 1,000. The average price is probably about Rs. 100. A man who is too poor to pay cash for a girl works for some time in the houses of his father-in-law as a *ghorojia*. Amongst the animistic tribes the essential portion of the ceremony is a feast of pork and rice washed down with great quantities of rice beer. The cost of such a wedding breakfast is about Rs. 50.

Infirmities.

The abstract in the margin shows out of 10,000 males the number afflicted with the four special infirmities selected for record at the Census of 1901.

	Goalpara	Assam	Indian Empire.
Insanity ...	8	5	3
Deaf mutism ...	11	9	6
Blindness ...	13	10	12
Leprosy ...	21	13	5

The district enjoys an extraordinary pre-eminence with regard to three out of four of these infirmities. The proportion of insane, blind, and leprous persons of both sexes in Goalpara, at each of the last three enumerations, was not exceeded by any other district in the plains of the Province, with the solitary exception of blind men in 1891, and even they stood a good second on the list. The proportion of deaf-mutes never fell below the average for the plains; but this, in view of the other

extraordinary record, might almost be considered a matter for congratulation. It has been suggested that the prevalence of insanity may be due to a special predisposition of the Koch race to that form of disease. This theory derives some confirmation from the fact that the proportion of insane persons is exceptionally high in Kuch Bihar and the neighbouring district of Rangpur. With regard to leprosy, Goalpara enjoys a position not only of Provincial but even of Imperial eminence. In 1901, there were only three districts in the whole of the Indian Empire, with a larger proportion of male lepers. The causes which tend to increase or diminish the prevalence of this disease are still unknown.

Language. Bengali is the common language of the district, and was returned by 69 per cent. of the population in 1901. Assamese was spoken by less than three per cent. In both cases the form of dialect in use is far from pure. The tribesmen are, however, unusually faithful to their own peculiar forms of speech, and nearly a fourth of the total population use Kachari, Rabha, or Garo, all of which are closely akin. Many of the villagers in the Eastern Duars can understand no language other than their own. In the other districts of the Assam Valley the Tibeto-Burman tribes are generally bilingual, and know enough of Assamese to enable them to carry on a conversation with their Hindu neighbours. This is not the case in Goalpara, and in the Eastern Duars intercourse with the villagers is much restricted for any one who does not happen to have studied Mech.

Homogeneity is the dominant note in the social system of Goalpara, and a single caste, the Rajbansi, form over one fourth of the total population. The ranks of the Rajbansi are recruited from the aboriginal tribes such as the Mech, Rabha, and Kachari, and if they with the Koch, who are also akin, are added, this single group amounts to more than half the total population of the district. More than one fourth of the total population are Muhammadans, and less than a quarter of the whole is thus left for all castes and tribes outside the Rajbansi group. The higher castes, such as the Brahman and Kayastha, are by no means strongly represented. Even the Kalitas, who stand for middle class respectability in Assam and form so large a proportion of the population of Kamrup, are comparatively few in numbers. The same may be said of the Kewats or Kaibarttas, who rank next after the Kalitas in the estimation of the Assamese. Goalpara never, however, formed part of the Ahom kingdom, and, though it is one of the districts of the Assam Valley, it belongs more to Northern Bengal than to Assam Proper. Brief notes are given in the following pages on the indigenous castes and tribes who had more than 5,000 members in the district in 1901.* **Caste and tribe.**

The Brahmans perform the offices usually allotted to them in Bengal, and act as priests, and officers, ministerial or otherwise, of Government and the great land- **Brahmans.**

Males	...	2,308.
Females	...	... 898

*An alphabetical glossary of all castes censused in Assam will be found in Chap. XI of the Census Report for 1901.

lords. Most of these men are foreigners, a fact which is clearly brought out by the disproportion between the sexes, there being nearly three males to every female. The Brahmans of Goalpara fall into four classes, Vaidik, Rarhi, Barendra, and Kamrupi. The Vaidik Brahmans are descended from men of that caste who migrated from Upper India to Bengal about the eleventh century A. D., but the Rarhi and Barendra septs have moved into the district in more recent times. Many of the Kamrupi Brahmans are priests who minister to castes comparatively low in the social scale. They also infringe the traditions of their caste by taking money for their daughters, a practice condemned by the orthodox.

Garos. The Garos are a tribe of Bodo origin, the bulk of whom are to be found in the hills that bear their name.

Males	...	5,438
Females	...	5,404

According to their own traditions they came originally from Tibet and settled in Kuch Bihar. From there they were driven to Jogighopa, and thence to Gauhati, where they were enslaved by the Assamese. They were, however, delivered by a Khasi prince, and then travelled *viâ* Boko to the Garo Hills. Most of the Garos are to be found in the hilly country on the outskirts of the Garo Hills. They live in better style than many of the hill tribes and are to some extent differentiated from other members of the Bodo family by the good position accorded to their women and the extraordinary scantiness of the national costume. A full account of the manners and customs of the Garos will be found in a Monograph on the Garo tribe which is now under preparation.

Jugis.

The Jugis are a low caste whose traditional occupation is weaving, and who are looked down upon by their superiors in the social scale. Like other humble castes they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation, of Siva. The Jugis in Goalpara support their pretensions by laying claim to ceremonial purity. They are taking to infant marriage, and some even go so far as to assume the sacred thread. Very few Jugis now earn their living as weavers, and the caste as a whole has taken to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

Males	...	... 6,904
Females	...	... 6,900

In Goalpara, they form a comparatively advanced section of the community and declare that the period of depression through which the caste has passed was entirely due to the malevolence of Ballal Sen.

Kacharis: their origin.

The Kacharis or Bara (mispronounced Bodo), as they call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found, not only in the Brahmaputra Valley, but in the Garo Hills and in Hill Tippera, south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper water of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. This theory has much to recommend it and is to some extent confirmed

Males	...	... 7,342
Females ...		... 7,325

by a prayer which is in use amongst the Dimasa* in the North Cachar Hills. This prayer refers to a huge pepul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill on which the temple of Kamakhya stands, in Kamrup. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur. The inscriptions recorded on copper plates in the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D., refer to the conquest of Kamarupa by a foreign dynasty which was subsequently replaced by a king of the line of Narak†. It is possible that the Kacharis were the invading force, and on their expulsion from Gauhati they might not unnaturally have retreated towards the Dhansiri valley.

No connection between Kacharis of Goalpara and Dimapur.

The Kachari kingdom was one of the strongest powers with which the Ahoms were confronted when they entered the valley of the Brahmaputra. Their capital was located at Dimapur on the Dhansiri river, and at one time they were in possession of the western part of Sibsagar, and the greater part of the Nowgong district. Dimapur was sacked by the Ahoms in 1536, and the Kachari king was compelled to move his capital to Maibang. Subsequently they migrated to the plains of Cachar, and the last representative of the line was assassinated there in 1830. It seems, however, doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of

* The Dimasa a·e the section of the Kacharis who live in the Cachar district.

† *Vide* J. A. S. B, Vol LXVII, Part 1, No. 1. 1898, page 99.

the Brahmaputra were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa, and, though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang, no doubt, from the same stock, but there is no evidence to show that they were ever united by the tie of a common nationality, or that the Kacharis of Goalpara were more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar, than are the Rabhas and Lalungs.

Dimasa legend of the separation of the two tribes.

The following legend is prevalent amongst the Dimasa. It would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Goalpara.

"Long ago the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground, but after a time further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair the king resolved to fight again on the following day: but in the night a god appeared to him and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank, and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety."

The ordinary Kachari of the north bank is an illiterate villager who has only vaguely heard of the Kacharis of Nowgong, but knows that their language differs slightly from his own. He is quite innocent of history, has

never heard of the Kachari raj, and as a source of information of anything prior to the immediate present is absolutely useless. A full account of the manners and customs of the Kacharis will be found in the Gazetteer of the Kamrup district.

Kalita. The following account of the Kalitas is taken from the Census Report of 1901:—

Males	... ...	6,198
Females	.. ...	4,856

"There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The popular explanation is that Kalitas are Kshatriyas, who, fleeing from the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kullupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware, by any evidence, or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is that they are the remains of an Aryan colony, who settled in Assam at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word 'Kalita' was originally applied to all Aryans who were not Brahmans. The Kalitas are divided into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional sub-castes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explantions are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the '*hom*' ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can intermarry with, and eat *kachchi* with the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there

seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mali, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their ranks ; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stronger man of the two."

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam Proper, except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and co-habitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman, but the poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies, which consist of a feast to the villagers and a public acknowledgment of the position of the bride. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification, but it can be performed after co-habitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl, who becomes pregnant, does not forfeit her position in the society, unless her lover is of a lower caste.

Koch. The Koches of Goalpara are quite distinct from the Bakoch of Kamrup, who find their counterpart in Goalpara in the Rajbansi. The Goalpara Koch is, as a rule, a very humble person who eats pork and carries palanquins, and who is looked upon as inferior to the Mech or Rabha.

Males	...	3,720
Females	...	3,419

Meches. The name Mech is popularly derived from Mlechcha, and the proper tribal name is Bara usually mispronounced Bodo, which like many tribal names, means "man." The bulk of the Mech tribe inhabit the grassy uplands at the foot of the Himalayas, and they are believed to be absolutely identical with the Kacharis.*

Male	...	36,804
Female	...	36,956

They were at one time divided into several subdivisions. The names of two of these, "the heaven born," *swargiariya*, and the *bargoariya*, "those who speak in the public assembly" suggest that there were originally sections of the tribe who arrogated to themselves a certain superiority over the common people. The names of the other sections which are called after the plantain, betel-nut, the tiger, fishes, etc., seem to be of totemistic origin. The subdivisions have fallen into practical desuetude, and are now neither endogamous or exogamous sections. The only restriction on marriage, provided that it takes place within the tribe, is the one, common to most people, that prohibits the union of near relations. They abstain from beef,

* Viswa Sing, the first Koch king is said to have been the son of a Mechani by Siva.

but eat pork and fowls and are naturally looked down upon by their Hindu neighbours. At the same time the Meches do not consider themselves to be by any means at the bottom of the social scale, and decline to admit Garos, Rabhas, and the lowest Hindu castes into their community.

Crops and trade.

The great bulk of the tribe live on the high grassy uplands at the foot of the Himalayas. Their villages are generally fenced in, but their standard of domestic architecture is distinctly low. They grow vegetables and fruit trees in their gardens, which are carefully fenced to keep out pigs and fowls, but the presence of these creatures gives the village a dirty and untidy appearance. Agriculture is their main occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. It is raised in fields which are irrigated from the hill streams, and which yield bumper crops though the soil is often poor and sandy. The water is brought in channels, sometimes several miles in length, dug by the combined labour of the villagers. The people are dirty in their habits, and extremely unsophisticated. Many of them hardly understand a word of Bengali or Assamese, and such trade as is carried on is chiefly transacted by barter. They seldom go to market, but during the rains traders come up the rivers and exchange earthen pots, dried fish, salt, and other articles for rice, at rates of exchange which are usually fixed by the panchayat. Typical rates are 5 seers of paddy (unhusked rice) for one seer of salt, which is equivalent to about 12 annas a maund for paddy and 6 seers of paddy for an earthen pot, while

dried fish fetches about twenty times its weight in grain. About half the produce of their rice fields is consumed by the Meches in the form of beer. They require but little cash except to pay their revenue, and the little they require is obtained by the sale of mustard, or, where there is no land suited for this crop, by working in the forests of the district.

Social customs and religion. Marriage in almost invariably adult, and it is thought desirable that the bride should be older than the groom. The price of a girl is usually about Rs. 100, and if the man cannot provide this sum he works in her father's house, each year of service being valued at Rs. 20. Pregnancy in an unmarried girl entails no disgrace, provided that the father of the child is a man of her own tribe, and is willing to make an honest woman of her. On the occasion of the marriage swine or fowls are offered to the Bura Deo, and the friends and relations are regaled with a Homeric feast. Wealthy Meches who have come under the influences of Hinduism burn their dead, but the usual practice is to bury the body, or simply to throw it into the jungle to be devoured by jackals. Their principal God is called Bura Deo, who is represented by the Siju or cactus found growing in every courtyard, but sacrifices are also offered to a large number of minor deities. An old woman called the *deodhani* acts as the mediatrix with heaven, and takes a principal part in the pujas performed at the harvesting of the summer and winter rice. She also is called in in times of trouble to ascertain what deity is offended, and how he best may be

propitiated. Hinduism has, however, left its mark upon the simple tribal faith, and the Meches worship Mahadeo, Bishahari, Kali, and other Hindu deities. The fowls that they offer to these gods would, however, be a source of dire offence to the orthodox Hindu. They are said to have vague ideas of a future life and of heaven and hell, but their theories on the subject are extremely hazy.

The Namasudra or Chandal is a boating and fishing caste, said by Manu to have sprung from the union of a Brahman woman with a Sudra, and therefore to be the lowest of the low. They are a cheerful and hardworking people but are heartily despised by their Hindu neighbours. A degraded Brahman acts as their priest and the village barber declines to shave them. A section of the Chandals has formed itself into a separate caste called Hira. They work as potters but do not use the wheel, laying on the clay in strips. Many of the Chandals have now taken to agriculture as their occupation. Namasudra.

Males	...	...	3,606
Females	...	...	3,064

The Rabhas are a section of the Bodo race and appear to be an offshoot of the Garos. Their language is closely akin to Garo, and their original habitat seems to have been the northern slopes of the Garo Hills. Certain sections of the tribe which live on the borders of that district, have no word for north and south but describe the former idea by Bhutan, the latter by Tura, a fact which pretty clearly indicates the locality from which they originally came. Most of the Rabhas have, Rabhas.

Male	...	...	13,445
Females	...	...	13,691

however, left their ancestral home and settled in Darrang, Kamrup, and Goalpara. In the last named district the bulk of the tribe are to be found south of the Brahmaputra.

The Rabhas are divided into the following seven sections—Rangdania, Pati, Maitariya, Koch, Bitlia, Dahuria, and Sangha. The Rangdania lay claim to a position of superiority, but inter-marriage is allowed with the Patis and Maitariyas. Inter-marriage between the first three sections and the lower subdivisions of the caste is permitted, but only on payment of a fine of about Rs. 100. The Rabhas look down upon the Garos and in their turn are treated as inferiors by the Mech. Like the other animistic tribes they are fond of beer, pork, and chicken, but they abstain from beef. Their villages are not unlike those of the Mech, they have gardens and fruit trees, but pigs and fowls do much damage, and the homestead is very different from the green dankery of bamboos, fruit trees, and vegetables which surrounds the houses of the Hindus. Agriculture is their usual occupation and rice the staple crop grown. What money they require is usually obtained by sale of surplus produce or work in the forests of the district. Adult marriage is in vogue, and wives in Goalpara are said to be extremly cheap. As a rule they can be had for nothing, and it is only occasionally that the lover has to pay thirty or forty rupees for the object of his affections. Vermilion is smeared on the bride's forehead, a practice which does not obtain amongst most of the aboriginal tribes, but

the essential part of the ceremony is the killing of two fowls and the feasting of the villagers. The Pati Rabhas go further than this, and model their procedure as closely as possible on the Hindu ceremony. The dead, too, are generally burned, unless an epidemic is in progress when it is thought that the infection might be conveyed in the smoke of the funeral pyre. Their chief god is called Rishi and is represented by a pot of rice on a bamboo platform, to which offerings of fowls and pigs are made. After death their souls are said to be absorbed into Rishi, a Buddhistic form of doctrine, but their views on this subject, like those of other animistic tribes, are probably extremely vague.

Rajbansis.

The Rajbansis of Goalpara are one of the race castes of Assam, and apparently correspond to the Bar Koch of Kamrup. The name Koch has, however, to be avoided, as in Goalpara it is only used by a small and degraded section of the tribe, with whom the Rajbansi will have no concern. The Rajbansi or Koches, to use the title by which the tribe is more generally known, are common not only in Assam but in Northern Bengal. They appear to be of mixed lineage. On the west their affinities are with the Dravidian stock, on the east with the Mongolian. The centre of the Koch power was in Kuch Bihar, and in Goalpara the tribe were in a position to be much affected by the traditions of the ruling race. The Koch Raja and his court were a considerable factor in their lives, and the tribesmen have assumed the honorific title of Rajbansi, or "men

Males ...	... 58,746.
Females ...	... 57,039.

of royal stock." There seems to be no doubt that the Koch and Rajbansi of Assam are one and the same caste, but in Rangpur, it is said that the Rajbansis seem to be a distinct tribe of Dravidian origin, possibly akin to the Tiyar, which affects to despise the Mongolian Koch.* Rajbansis are allowed to bring water for Brahmans, and they abstain entirely from pork and liquor. In matrimonial matters they display a pedantic desire to conform to the dictates of orthodox Hinduism. In Assam Proper, marriage is usually adult, and the services of the priest are often dispensed with. In Goalpara, the Rajbansis regularly perform the *hompura* rite, and marry their girls at a comparatively early age. Nearly 10 per cent. of the Rajbansi girls under 12 had perfomed the marriage ceremony in 1901, as compared with less than 2 per cent. amongst the Koches of Kamrup. The staple occupation of the caste is agriculture. Meches and Rabhas are said to be admitted into the category of Rajbansis on conversion, but they have first to pass through the preliminary stages of *Madahi*, and *Sarania*. A Rajbansi who has risen in the world generally claims to be a Bhanga-Kshatriya and styles himself Das.

Religion. Forty-four per cent. of the population in 1901 were Hindus, 28 per cent. Muhammadans, and 27 per cent. were still faithful to their tribal forms of religion. The actual numbers returned under these three heads in each of the subdivisions, will be found in Table IV.

Hindu Sects. 83 per cent. of the Hindus returned the special

* Report on the Census of Bengal, 1901, page 382

sect to which they attorned. Of these, 6 per cent. described themselves as Saktists, or worshipper of the generative powers as manifested in the female; 4 per cent. as followers of Siva; and 90 per cent. as Vaishnavites. Nearly one fifth of the Vaishnavites were said to be Mahapurushias.

This form of Hinduism is thus described in the Assam Census Report for 1901:

"Sankar Deb. the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A.D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who according to traditions had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the King of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision, where, in conjunction with his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste, and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people, who formed a large proportion of his converts, found this injunction a counsel of perfection, and the Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the Sattra at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigotted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from smallpox in the neighbourhood of the Sattra is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans re-asserted their influence, and shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who were members of this caste, established sects

called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushias by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushia creed and subsequently its followers adopted the teachings of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or "other Vaishnavas" as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no god but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognise Brahmans as their gosains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons, and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb arose one stormy day when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing ovorhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna, the god of rain. Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater, and was incontinently, by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition.

A list of the temples, shrines, and *dhams* of Goalpara is annexed, but none of these places are of any note. The most important shrines are the ones at Jogighopa, Tukreswari, and Madhab. It is said that the thigh of Sati fell on the Tukreswari hill, when her body was dismembered by Vishnu. The place is, however, only visited by the people of the neighbourhood, so that this tradition is evidently not accepted by the Saktist community as a whole. A large number of monkeys live on the hill, and are fed by the devotees. The largest of these monkeys is styled their king and is served with food upon a silver dish. *Dhams* are priestly colleges, corresponding to the *sattras* of Assam, occupied as a rule by a few Vaishnavite monks. The most important *dham* is the one at Bistupur. Both *dhams* and temples possess, as a rule, small grants of land. The word temple is, however, almost a misnomer, as there is seldom anything more than a small hut enclosing the *lingum* or other sacred relic.

Temple and dhams.

Name.	Pargana in which situated.	Name.	Pargana in which situated.
TEMPLES.		Kali Mangal Chandi ...	Khuntaghat.
Dhubri Subdivision.		Madan Mohan ...	Do.
Alakjhari ...	Ghurlla.	Madhab* ...	Do.
Mahamaya ...	Bagribari.	Mahadeb ...	Habraghat
Goalpara Subdivision.		Mangal Chandi ...	Khuntaghat
Bageswari ...	Khuntaghat.	Narsingbari ..	Goalpara Town.
Buri Thakurani ..	Do.	Radhakrishna ...	Habraghat.
Chaturbhuj* ...	Do.	Ram Chandra ...	Khuntaghat.
Dugdhanath ...	Do.	Sita Thakurani ...	Do.
Gopinath* ..	Do.	Syam Rai ...	Do.
Kala Chand Thakur ...	Do.	Syam Sundar ...	Goalpara Town.
		Tukreswari ...	Habraghat.

* There are two temples of the same name in the same pargana.

Name.	Pargana in which situated.	Name.	Parganna in which situated.
DHAMS.		*Married Kayastha Gosain.*	
Dhubri Subdivision.		Baguan	... Mechpara.
Married Kayastha Gosain.		Balipur	... Khuntaghat.
Chhatrasal	... Ghurlla.	Bishtupur	.. Do.
Goalpara Subdivision.		Dalgoma	... Habraghat.
Married Brahman Gosain.		*Ganak Gosain.*	
Kathalmuri	... Habraghat.	Srijangram	... Khuntaghat.

Animism. Twenty-seven per cent. of the population in 1901 were still faithful to the primitive forms of tribal belief usually described as animistic. Broadly speaking their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads.

To account for the existence of the material world they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the stories of the creation given in most religious systems. The way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal proportion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that some body or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then

endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and try to appease him in whatever way they can. The bulk of the animistic population is found in the submontane tracts both north and south of the Brahmaputra.

The effect of the Muhammadan occupation of Goalpara is to be seen in the fact that in 1901, nearly 28 per cent. of the total population professed the faith of Islam, as compared with 9 per cent. in the neighbouring district of Kamrup. Practically all the Muhammadans belong to the Sunni sect. They are said to be fairly well grounded in the principles of their faith and to have been little affected by Hindu superstitions. There are no mosques of special sanctity, and prayers are usually said in a thatched hut. In Dhubri, however, there is the tomb of Shah Akbar, who was one of the Panch Pirs, or five wise men, who are venerated by Hindus and Muhammadans alike in Eastern Bengal. Assam was always regarded by the Musalmans as a country of witchcraft and enchantments. Mir Jumla accordingly summoned the Panch Pirs to his aid, as it was thought that they at any rate might overcome the spells of the Assamese, but unfortunately one of them succumbed himself and had to be buried in Dhubri. At the present day conversions to the faith of Islam are said to be far from common. **Muhammadanism.**

In 1901, there were 3,495 Christians in Goalpara, a figure which was only exceeded by the districts of the Khasi and Jaintia, and the Garo Hills. Successive enumerations have disclosed a considerable increase **Christians.**

amongst the native Christian population, the figures being, 1881, 392; 1891, 1,547; and 1901, 3,429. 2,122 of these persons described themselves as Baptists; and were censused in the Goalpara subdivision, where there is a branch of the American Baptist Mission; 1,282 were disciples of the Lutheran Mission that founded the Santal colony north of Dhubri, an account of which will be found in Chapter VII.

There is a most prosperous Christian village at Nisangram, near Damra, on the borders of the Garo Hills. This community was founded by two converted Garos, who in 1863, opened a school for Garo children at Damra. They then proceeded to lease some flat land from the Bijni Raja, invited their fellow tribesmen from the hills, and founded a flourishing village community at a place called Nisangram, which in 1904, occupied about 2,000 bighas of fertile and well irrigated rice land. There are about 150 houses in the village with its adjoining hamlets, 100 of which are occupied by Christian families. It is the largest Garo village in the Province, and the church numbered, in 1904, over 700 members. The people support their own pastor, and contribute to the maintenance of schools, and of six evangelists who are employed in preaching to the Garos. They also subscribe towards the support of an evangelist working amongst a tribe in Upper Assam. They have built, and contribute largely towards the support of three schools in Nisangram, and have built a chapel with belfry and bell, glazed doors, and windows. For thrift, prosperity, and general respectability the Garos

of Nisangram are an example to the remainder of the tribe.

Minor Religions. The figures in the margin give details for other religions that were not strongly represented in the district at the census of 1901. The Jains were most of them traders from Marwar. The Buddhists were Bhutias and Nepalese. The Brahmos represent the more highly educated section of the community and nearly all of them were living in Dhubri town. Though there are very few Sikhs in Goalpara, Dhubri, which is known to them as Damdam Guruduara, is a place of pilgrimage for the followers of the Sikh faith. The small hill at Dhubri is said to have been artificially constructed in 1665 A. D., at the request of Guru Tez Bahadur. The Muhammadan army brought great quantities of earth on their shields from the Rangamati hill, and, when the Assamese flooded the country, they took refuge on the hillock they had so laboriously constructed. A small Sikh temple now stands at the foot of the hill.

Jains	457
Buddhists	346
Brahmos	50
Sikhs	2

Occupation. As in the rest of Assam agriculture is the ordinary occupation of the people, but the proportion of agriculturists, (84 per cent.), though high, is considerably below the average for the Assam Valley. The most densely populated portions of the district are permanently settled, and the number of persons supported by cultivation in 1901, who held direct from the state was only 72,700, as compared with 275,500 who were classified as tenants. The different classes of sub-tenure

and the rates of rent paid are discussed in the section on rents, wages, and prices. One of the most peculiar features in the economic organization of Assam, and one of the principal obstacles to its natural development, is the complete absence of a labouring class. In this respect, Goalpara, at first sight, appears to differ from the rest of the Brahmaputra Valley, as, in 1901, nearly eight per cent. of the population were said to be supported by farm service and field labour. The great majority of these labourers were, however, women. These women were, in all probability, only the wives and daughters of the ordinary cultivator, who help him to plant his seedlings and cut his paddy, and do not represent a labouring class in the sense in which that word is ordinarily understood. Other occupations that in 1901 supported more than one per cent. of the total population, were fishing, dealing in grain, general labour, and begging. Most of the general labourers were employed on the railway which was under construction in the district in that year. The great majority of the grain dealers were women, and, like the agricultural labourers, were probably merely the wives and daughters of the petty farmer. With an urban population of only a little over two per cent. of the whole, it is not to be expected that non-agricultural occupations would be of much importance in the district. The occupations recorded at the Census of 1901 were divided into eight main classes and the numbers returned under each head were as follows :—

Government 1647, or less than half per cent., Pasture

and agriculture 387,440, or 84 per cent., Personal services 5,538 or 1 per cent., Preparation and supply of material substances 37,143, or 8 per cent., Commerce transport and storage 7,403, or 2 per cent., Professions 4,156 or 1 per cent., Unskilled labour not agricultural 10,654 or 2 per cent., Means of livelihood independent of occupation 8,071 or 2 per cent. total 462,052.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulse—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of molasses—Causes affecting the productiveness of land—Garden crops—Tea—Yield and value of crops—General remarks—Livestock—Forests—Classification of reserved forests—System of management.

Crops grown. The staple food crop of the district is rice. Other important crops are mustard, pulse, and wheat, which is believed to cover about 10,000 acres in the western portion of the district. Millets, such as *kaon (setaria italica)* and *china (panicum miliaceum)*, are grown on sandy soils which are exposed to flood, as they can nearly always be reaped before the waters rise. Jute is largely grown for export; and it is said that as much as 2,000 acres are under the tobacco plant. Sugarcane is not much in favour, and the area under tea is insignificant. A little cotton is grown on the hills to the south of the district, but the bulk of the cotton that passes through Goalpara is imported from the Garo Hills. The general system of cultivation and the way in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs.

Rice can be classified under three main heads *roa*, *ashu or bitri*, and *boa*. *Roa dhan* or transplanted paddy is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*bichan*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times, and is carefully manured with cowdung and sweepings. The soil is not, however, reduced to a puddle. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed in May and June, and, during the time that this operation is going on, water is sprinkled over the bed from a bamboo scoop. It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times, till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls *(guchi)*, each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these handfuls are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, and on the time

Rice: roa.

at which they are put out. Seedlings planted at the beginning of the season will be placed eighteen inches apart, those planted later not more than six. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and if they seem too luxuriant the tops are cut off when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September. The work is of a most arduous description and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but, about the beginning of October, they begin to fill and the field to turn to a rich yellow.

From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. The women grasp a handful of ears and cut them off near the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary, the *muthis* are made into larger sheaves. Six to eight *muthis* form an *athi*, and five or six *athis* a *bojha*. A *bojha* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *bankua*, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men. The straw is not left in the fields as is customary in Upper Assam, but is stored and used as fodder, and is gradually acquiring a commercial value.

Ashu. *Ashu* is generally sown broad-cast, and is grown under two different sets of conditions. When sown on marshy

land the usual procedure is as follows. In May, the jungle is cut down and burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle that has sprung up in the interval is cleared in the same way, and ploughing begins at the beginning of February. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown, and the land again ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the middle of July. The crop is, however, a precarious one, and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed.

Ashu is sometimes sown in conjunction with *boa*, in the hope that, if the earlier crop is destroyed, the longer stemmed and sturdier *boa* may at any rate survive. It is also sown on high lands near the village site. The soil is poor, but is manured with the sweepings of the courtyard and the cowshed. Where grain is urgently required a crop of summer rice is sometimes taken from fields which are subsequently planted with *roa*. This is seldom done except in the Khuntaghat and Habraghat parganas. *Ashu* is also occasionally transplanted, the system of cultivation employed being substantially the same as that in force for *roa*. It is sown in the beginning of April, transplanted some six week later,

and reaped about the beginning of August. Transplanted *ashu* is generally grown on irrigated land. The crop ripens earlier than *roa* and thus gives a quicker return on the labour expended in its production.

Boa dhan.

Boa dhan is sown broadcast about the middle of March. It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *roa* and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the beginning of December and is harvested in the same way as *roa*. There are several kinds of *boa* dhan, some of which increase in length as the water rises, so that the stalk finally attains to most extraordinary dimensions. One variety, which is known as *lewa boa*, is said to be sometimes as much as 24 feet long. *Mera boa* will grow to 15 feet in length, and *kekoa* and *salmati* to 18 feet. In Parbatjoar the longest variety is known as *amnakasha*. If there is a sudden flood and the rice is overtopped for any length of time the plant is drowned; but, when the water rises gradually, the rapid growth of the stalk keeps the ear above the level of the water.

Mustard.

Mustard, as has been already said, is often grown in conjunction with *ashu* on the riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps dug out, and the land is then ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown about the end of October, and the plant is ready to be pulled from the field about the middle of January. It

is generally left to dry for a few days, and is then tied in bundles and carried to the homestead, where it is threshed out by the cattle. Mustard is also grown on land which has been cropped with jute, and derives much benefit from the manure that is freely bestowed upon the latter crop. There is also a considerable area under mustard in the Bijni Duar.

Pulse.

Pulse is either grown on the riparian flats or on the higher land which has been cropped with summer rice. The following are the principal varieties of pulse raised in Goalpara. *Mash kalai*, (*phaseolus mungo* var. *radiatus*) a large dark coloured variety. The seed is generally sown in September and the crop is ripe about three or four months later. *Thaguri kalai* smaller and lighter coloured; *mug* (*phaseolus mungo* linn:); *khesari* (*lathyrus sativus*) which is sown in October or November and takes six months to ripen; *masuri* (*lens esculenta*) and *matar* (*pisum arvense*) which are cultivated in much the same way as *khesari*; and *arhar* (*cajanus indicus*) which is sown in April and May and takes about ten months to ripen.

Fibres.

The cultivation of jute entails the expenditure of a considerable amount of time and trouble, and stiff soils are sometimes ploughed as many as ten times. When it is sown on land which has not been enriched by deposits of the river's silt, manure is extensively employed. The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water for from fifteen to twenty days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up,

broken a foot or two from the lower end, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out. The fibres are then dried and are ready for transport to the market. Small patches of *khunkhora* or rhea (*boehmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes where they are heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale. A little cotton is also grown on the hills in the south of the district.

Storage and threshing of grain.

When the paddy is brought from the field it is at once threshed out by the cattle.* It is next passed through a sieve and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and dropped slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. Paddy is stored in separate granaries called *gola*, but mustard, pulse, and the smaller grains in huge drums called *dhols*.

Agricultural implements: the Plough.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made from the mango or sal tree, or from some other hard wood, and consists of three parts—the handle and body, which are usually all in one piece, the pole, which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke, which is merely a piece of wood,

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, D. L R. & A, showed that nine bullocks took only 2 hours and 8 minutes to tread out $7\frac{1}{2}$ mds. of paddy.

fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he usually makes for himself, though Garos and Meches sometimes make ploughs for sale. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs. and when cattle are used the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed the plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

Other implements.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder about eight feet in length, on which two men stand as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by the mallet (*kushi bari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*ails*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have

also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. In *ashu* cultivation a large wooden rake (*bedha*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock, when the plants are about six inches high. The *hachini*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ashu* rice. A large wooden mortar *oran*, and pestle *gain*, are generally used to husk the paddy.

Sugarcane. Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is usually grown on high land near the village site, and, as the soil is poor, it has to be well manured with cowdung. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and, as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognised. The *mugi* or white stands about seven feet high, and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *rangi* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *khagrai* is tall, hard, and very thin, and, though it is does not yield so much juice as some of the other kinds, the quality of the molasses is very good. The red and white varieties of Bombay are tall and juicy, but the percentage of molasses obtained from a given quantity of juice is rather small. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout

hedge of *arhar dal* (*cajanus indicus*); but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of the ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

Preparation of molasses.

The iron sugarcane mill has now almost entirely displaced the home made mill of wood. When twelve or fifteen gallons of juice have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and generally has two circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potters clay. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition it is ladled into a wooden vessel and stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. Sugar is extracted from molasses by the following process. The molasses are placed in a bamboo basket on a bamboo stool which is set over a pan. The basket is covered with a kind of grass called *khar*, which is continually sprinkled with water to keep it moist. At the end of about three weeks part of the molasses has crystallized into white sugar (*dalua chini*); the refuse (*naligur*)

has trickled into the basket and is generally used not to eat but to mix with tobacco.

Causes affecting productiveness of land.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes, the water supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals and birds, and shade. The first named factor is probably of most importance, as irrigated land in the submontane tracts yields bumper crops from poor and sandy soil. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra, to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. In popular parlance land is divided into the following four classes, according as it yields a 16, 12, 8, or 4 anna crop—*awel*, *duem*, *suem*, and *chaharam*. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, and elephants and monkeys south of the Brahmaputra, field rats, and a bird called the *kaim*. Serious damage is sometimes done by an insect called the *gandhi (leptocorisa acuta)*. It is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August and is particularly *en evidence* during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and pushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. A worm

called *utroonga* also does damage to young plants. Rain is wanted when *roa* is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *ashu* and *boa*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

Garden crops. The plantain

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain *(musa sapientum)*. As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia, manua, cheni champa*, and *malbhog*. The first two groups are again sub-divided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *manua* is a somewhat smaller tree, with a white and slightly acid fruit. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead, where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure. The finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earth worms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of waterlogging is most injurious. The trees are placed in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches

10

deep, and are manured with cowdung, ashes, and sweepings. Young saplings take about fourteen months to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn to fruit. The plaintain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower and the inner part of the trunk are much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution distilled from the sheaths and the corm is often used in place of salt. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *khar*, is used in place of salt, as a hair wash, and as a mordent with certain dyes.

Other garden crops.

The betelnut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the villagers are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and the nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Mangoes, jack fruit, lemons, and cocoanut are also common. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured

beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is slightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing they are dried under a shed. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe the leaves are piled in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are, spinach (*basella alba*), different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*), and radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka sag* (*rumex vesicarius*, and the brinjal (*solanum melongena*), with potatoes, onions, garlic, chillies, ginger, and turmeric.

Tea. Tea is a crop of no importance in Goalpara. There are only four small gardens in the district which are situated at Lalkura, Marnai, and Tamai. The total area under plant is 700 acres. A full account of the tea industry will be found in the Gazetteers of the Sibsagar or Lakhimpur districts.

Yield and value of crops. The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown. The statement in the margin shows

the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department. These figures only represent a general mean and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the ryots vary to some extent in different parts of the district but probably average about Rs. 1 to 1-2 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *roa* is from 20 to 22 rupees: and from one of *ashu* from 17 to 19 rupees.

		lb.
Roa	...	... 1,000
Ashu	...	... 850

General remarks. Generally speaking the Hindus and Muhammadans of Goalpara are more careful and scientific cultivators than the inhabitants of Upper Assam. Manure is used for mustard and jute, and in the south-western corner of the district the villagers keep their cattle in the fields so that they may enrich them with their droppings. In the northern and eastern part of the district recourse is very generally had to irrigation. The villagers combine to dam the streams and *bils*, and carry the water through little channels (*dongs*) to their fields. Many of these channels are several miles in length, and some of them have attained to the dimensions of considerable streams. New staples seem to be adopted more readily in Goalpara than in Upper Assam. Jute

is cultivated on a commercial scale, and potatoes and various kinds of millets and pulses are coming into favour.

Live stock. As in the rest of Assam the buffaloes are fine upstanding animals, but the cattle as a rule are miserable little creatures. The goats are no better than the cattle and give very little milk. The only two varieties of buffaloes which seem to be recognised in the district are the *kachhar* and *bangar*. The former give a larger yield of milk and consequently command a higher price. The price of a bull buffalo ranges from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50, and of a cow from Rs. 15 to Rs. 70. The average price seems to be about Rs. 30 for the one and Rs. 40 for the other. Bullocks cost from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 the pair, and cows from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 each; though the price of a cow is said to be sometimes as low as Rs. 8, sometimes as high as Rs. 25. In the Eastern Duars, Nepalese cattle are occasionally to be found. They are said to be fine animals, almost as large as buffaloes. Cattle are grazed in swamps and marshes in the dry season, and on hills and high land lying waste in the rains. Generally speaking there does not seem to be any dearth of suitable pasture land, and it is only in the south-western portion of the district that the cattle have to be fed on paddy straw in the rains.

Forests. The southern half of the district is permanently settled and the Government forests are thus of necessity all situated in the Eastern Duars. They are divided into two classes, the reserves, which on June 30th 1904

covered an area of 787 square miles, and the unclassed state forests, which on the same date covered an area of 558 square miles. Unclassed state forest is, however, simply waste land at the disposal of the Government. The villagers are allowed to take it up at will for cultivation, and the greater part of it is entirely destitute of anything in the shape of tree growth.

Classification of reserved forests.

The 787 square miles of reserved forest are classified as follows: the figures in brackets represent the area in square miles. Pure sal forest (163); mixed sal forest (45); mixed forest (178); evergreen forest (83); sisu forest (4); khair forest (9); sisu and khair (26); grass land (183); land reserved for forest villages nearly all grass (66); rivers and swamps (24); other land (6). A considerable portion of the area shown as mixed forest would, however, be more properly classified as grass land,* though, now that these savannahs are protected from fire, the tracts that are suitable for the growth of trees are rapidly filling up with soft timber.

The reserves are seven in number. Bhumeswar is an isolated hill covering an area of 7 square miles in the extreme south east corner of the Sidli duar. It contains pure and mixed sal forest, but more than half the total area consists of precipitous slopes covered with rocks and grass. The Guma reserve is another isolated forest covering an area of 26 square miles, about 30

* Vide page 6 of Notes on the Goalpara Forest Division by Mr. T. J. Campbell. Shillong, 1896. This work is the authority for most of the statements made with regard to the Goalpara forests.

miles north of Dhubri. The high land is covered with almost pure sal forest, and the strips of low lying ground with which it is intersected, are gradually filling up with sum *(machilus odoratissima)*. The rest of the forests lie at the foot of the Bhutan Hills. The Kachugaon, Ripu, Bengtol, and Chirang reserves form a compact block, 558 square miles in area, in the north-west corner of the district. Then comes a stretch of unreserved land occupied by the valley of the Ai, and in the north-east corner is the Bijni reserve which covers 196 square miles.

The Kachugaon reserve covers an area of 66 square miles, and is situated to the south of the Ripu forest. It contains hardly any timber of value, but was constituted a reserve in 1902 to enable the department to establish forest villages, with the object of providing a permanent labour supply for the Ripu reserve. The Ripu forest lies at the foot of the Bhutan Hills between the Sankosh and the Saralbhanga, and covers an area of 235 square miles. The sal reaches its best development in this reserve on the ridges between the numerous streams. Khair and sisu are found along the river beds, and there is a considerable area of mixed forest and grass land. The Chirang forest lies east of the Ripu and covers an area of 234 square miles. To the north it consists of evergreen forest, containing very valuable and well grown timber though its inaccessibility has hitherto precluded its exploitation; to the south it is well stocked with sal. The Bengtol forest, which lies east of Chirang, only covers an area of 23 square

miles. It contains sal in clumps, but there are large areas of grass land which are gradually filling up with soft woods. Considerably more than half the Bijni reserve consisted originally of grass land, which has, under the influence of fire protection, rapidly filled up with soft woods. The bulk of the remainder is mixed deciduous forest. Along the river banks there is a certain quantity of khair and sisu. No revenue has ever been realized from this reserve. The Bijni, Chirang, Ripu, and Guma forests were originally formed into reserves in 1875, and have since that date received various additions. The Bengtol and Bhumeswar hill reserves were not notified till 1883.

Trees. The following are the principal trees which are found in the district:—sal *(shorea robusta)*, sissu *(dalbergia sissoo)*, sam *(artocarpus chaplasha)*, champa *(michelia champaca)*, jarul or ajhar *(lagerstrœmia flos reginæ)*, gunserai *(cinnamomum glanduliferum)*, poma or toon *(cedrela toona)*, khair *(acacia catechu)*, sida *(lagerstrœmia parviflora)*, khakan *(duabanga soneratioides)*, gugra *(schima molis)*, nahor *(mesua ferrea)*, dowki poma *(alseodaphne)*, patamari *(amoora spectabilis)*, simul *(bombax malabaricum)*, bola *(morus lævigata)*, uriam *(bischoffia javanica)*, aksi *(dillennia pentagyna)*, kumbi *(careya arborea)*, udal *(sterculia villosa)*, harra *(terminalia citrina)*, solet *(terminalia tomentosa)*, bahera *(terminalia belerica)*, paroli or serpang *(stereospermum chelonoides)*, jia *(garuga pinnata)*, and gomari *(gmelina arborea)*. Sal is, however, the only timber in which there is any appreciable trade.

System of management

A working plan for sal was prepared between 1889 and 1894 for the period from 1893 to 1903. A simple plan for trees other than sal was introduced in 1896 for the same period. The girth of exploitable trees is fixed at 5 feet. These plans are now under revision. Owing to want of purchasers it has never been found possible to dispose of the total number of trees permitted by the plan, and in some years there has been a serious deficit. On the other hand where the demand has been equal to the fixed yield the prescribed number of trees was not found upon the ground, and the number of marketable trees was probably over estimated.

Trees selected by purchasers are felled early in the year, and cut into logs *(dhums)* between 6 and 7 feet in length, and over 2½ feet in girth. They are roughly dressed and rolled to the neighbourhood of the nearest river. Towards the end of the rains, when there is plenty of water but no risk of flood, they are attached to canoes and floated down. This precaution is necessary as the specific gravity of sal is greater than that of water. These *dhums* are sold to purchasers from Eastern Bengal where they are used for boat building. There is also a considerable demand for sal posts, but this is principally met from the forests of the Zamindars. The construction of the Eastern Bengal State Railway through the Goalpara district has created a large demand for sleepers which has been met by the department. Labour is very difficult to procure and in order to facilitate the extraction of the timber 9½ miles of portable tramway have been purchased.

Table VIII shows the revenue derived from each reserve. The bulk of the receipts are obtained from the Ripu, Chirang, and Guma forests. Sal is sold standing at Rs. 10 per tree or annas six per cubic foot at present schedule rates. Dead and fallen sal timber is sold at the rates entered in the schedule at page 159 of the Assam Forest Manual. First class trees other than sal sell at Rs. 6 each.* All other kinds at Rs. 2 each. Sal logs at the sale depots are sold at Re. 1 per cubic foot for timber over 4 ft in girth, annas *twelve* for timber between 3 and 4 feet in girth, and annas eight for logs under 3 feet. Sawn sal timber is now sold at Rs. 1-12 to Rs. 2 per cubic foot. Sleepers fetch Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-4 for metre gauge lines. The present sale depots are at Bilasipara on the Brahmaputra river, Bagribari on the Tipkai river, Kachukata on the Gorafela river, and Barabadha on the Baunai river. For departmental purposes the forests are divided into four ranges, the Guma, Western, Eastern, and Bijni, ranges; and the Western and Eastern ranges are further subdivided into four circles. Fire and climbers do considerable injury. Table IX shows the area annually protected from fire and the cost incurred, and the outturn of timber and fuel from the reserves and unclassed state forests. Goalpara is the only district in the Assam Valley in which forest operations are carried on on a commercial scale. Work is, however, much hampered by the scarcity and high price of labour, and the difficulty of communications, and good management is

* A list of these trees will be found at page 45 of the Assam Forest Manual.

required to ensure a profit on departmental operations. The sal timber of Goalpara is exported by boat to Eastern and Lower Bengal. The principal market is at Dacca but the districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, Faridpur, and Rangpur also absorb a large quantity. Hitherto transport by boat only has been possible, but the completion of the railway will probably alter present conditions by opening inland markets.

The Zamindari forests.

Timber is also extracted from the forests of the Zamindars of Bijni, Chapar, Gauripur, Mechpara, and Parbatjoar. It is generally worked out in the form of poles.

CHAPTER V.

ARTS AND INDUSTRIES.

Industries—Silk—Pottery—Brass and Bell-Metal—Weaving—Lac—Mat-making—Fishing.

Industries. The industries of Goalpara are of very small importance. Tea is manufactured, but the total output in 1903 was less than 200,000 lbs. A full description of the system of manufacture will be found in the gazetteers of the Lakhimpur or Sibsagar districts. Other industries include the rearing of the *eri* silk worm, the manufacture of rough earthenware and metal vessels, the weaving of cotton cloth, the rearing of the lac insect, and the manufacture of wickerwork mats and baskets.

Silk. The silk industry is not nearly so important as in Assam Proper. *Pat* and *muga* are not reared and the only silk produced is that obtained from the *eri* worm. This worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. The females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty.

The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to fifteen days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown they are about 3½ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread.

The industry is not of very much importance and very little silk is prepared for sale. Rangjuli, North Salmara, and the Eastern Duars are the chief silk producing tracts. The most useful garment made of *eri* is the *bor kapor* or *gilap* a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12.

Pottery.

The earth used by potters is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well-kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel

revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun-dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun-dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are—the wheel (*chak*) which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin 16 inches long by 3½ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots (*hari and paitta*), large and small water jars (*kulsi* and *bashna*), and larger vessels (*hari* and *janga*) with lamps, pipes, and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the pottery made by local men is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, or made by potters from other parts of India, who come up to Goalpara in the winter and return to their homes before the breaking of the rains. The principal centres of the industry are at Fakirganj, Gauripur, Rupsi Satyapur, Rokakhata, Dubapara, and Marnai.

Brass and bell metal. Brass and bell metal utensils are only manufactured by temporary visitors from Sarthaibari and Hajo in Kamrup. Bell metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers, and chisels The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota*, *bati*), jars for holding water (*kulsi gagari*), trays (*sarai*), boxes to carry betel nut and lime (*tema*, *temi*), and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali*).

Weaving. The weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich and poor alike, and one or more looms are to be seen in the courtyard of almost every house. Though cotton is grown in the hills of the Province, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in its forests, the material employed is generally imported yarn, which is supplied in the requisite shades by the village shop-keeper. The loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a

rectangle about 5,′ 10′ × 2′ 6″, and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system of manufacture followed are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam," published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. The total cost of the whole apparatus is about ten rupees, and as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. There is, however, but little doubt that weaving as an industry is commercially a failure, the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *patanis* or cloths worn by women which are tied above the breast, large cloths called *gilap* or *bor kapor*, smaller shawls *pachara*, and *gamchas* or napkins often worn on the head.

Lac. Lac is reared on various members of the ficus family such as *pakri (ficus rumphii)*, and on arhar (*cajanus indicus*), *buldobuk* (*kydia calcyna*), *dhop* (*ficus altissima*), *kukursota* (*grewia multiflora*), and other trees, but as far as is known the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which the insect has been fed The method of propagation is as follows. Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which

the next crop is to be grown After a few days the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. A good sized tree yields from 30 seers to 2 maunds of stick lac, the best results being obtained from trees of moderate growth, which do not contain too rich a supply of sap. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. Almost all the lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac. Most of the lac is raised by Garos, Rabhas, and Kacharis, the principal centres of the industry being Rangjuli, Darangiri, and Dhupdhara in the Habraghat pargana; and Dharidhari, Makri, and Khormauza in the Mechpara pargana. The cultivation of lac has only recently been introduced into the Dhubri subdivision.

Mat making.

Four kinds of mats are made in Goalpara, *i.e.*, *pati*, *kath*, *dhara*, and *kathiadhara*. *Pati* mats are manufactured by the Patia caste from the *patidoia* (*maranta dichotoma*), and cost from annas 8 to a rupee. *Kath* mats are made of *moj* (*saccharum ciliare*) and are woven in a frame much as cotton is woven on the loom. They are generally made to use and not to sell, but if they come to market cost from annas 6 to

annas 10. *Dhara* mats are made of plaited bamboo, and *kathiadhara* of reed. Toys are also made of sola pith by Malakars and a few Rajbansis in parganas Ghurla, Jamira, Parbatjoar, Khuntaghat, and Kalumalupara, who sometimes turn-out quite artistic little images of gods and goddesses which cost some three or four rupees a piece. A rough kind of broad brimmed hat is also made from split bamboo and the leaves of the nahor *(mesua ferrea)* or sal tree *(shorea robusta.)*

The fishing industry. Fish are caught for home consumption by most sections of the community, but the professional fisherman is looked down upon and is generally a member of one of the humble castes such as the Jhalo, the Dom or Nadiyal, and the Hira, Manjhi, and Malla, amongst the Hindus; and the Datia amongst the Muhammadans During the cold weather large quantities of fish are despatched from Dhubri to Calcutta, and to various places in Kuch Bihar and Rangpur in the neighbourhood of the railway. Fish is often salted or dried for use in Goalpara, but is not generally exported in this state. The varieties most esteemed for the table are the hilsa *(clupea ilisha)*, the rui (*labeo rohita*), the chital (*notopterus chitala*), the bacha (*eutropiichthys vacha*), the magur (*clarias magur*), the ari (*arius*), the sol, the katla (*catla buchanani*) and the ghariya (*belone cancila*).

The principal nets in use are (1) the *uthar*, a large net which is spread on the surface of the water from a boat. The sides are weighted and sink together, and any fish that were swimming in the area covered are caught in the pockets round the weighted edges, (2) the *jata jal*, a triangular net the two sides of which are fastened

to two bamboos joined at the apex. A little below their junction the bamboos are fastened to two stout posts, on which they work on a pivot. The base of the net is allowed to sink into the water, and pressure is then applied to the vertex which raises the net and its contents. (3) the *bihiri* and *langi* nets, which are hung from crossed bamboos and are lowered from above into the water. (4) the *tanapaji* an ordinary drag net, (5) the *ber paji*, one end of which is fastened to a bamboo post in the water and the other end brought round in a circle, which is gradually contracted till all the fish within are caught; and (6) the *langi* a net which has two of its corners tied a little above the water to two stout posts. The front of the net is then lowered into the fishery and drawn up again, much as a drawbridge is raised and lowered. The *polo* resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker work. It is generally used by women who walk through shallow water and keep pressing the rim of the glass on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *Juluki* is a smaller kind of *polo*. The *Jaka* is a species of wicker work shovel, which, like the *polo*, is generally used by women. They place the broad end of the shovel on the ground before them, and trample up the mud so as to drive the small fry into it. Conical bamboo traps which are called *dingaru, thupa, sepa, gui, bhari, darki, khaidon* and *katia* are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, and are placed in small streams or running water near the rice fields.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE. COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWNS AND LOCAL BOARDS.

Rents—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of people—Conventional restrictions—Means of communication—Railways—Roads—Post and telegraph—Trade—Markets and fairs—Towns—Local Boards.

Rents. The rent law in force in Goalpara is Act VIII. B. C. of 1869. It is, however, seldom necessary to have recourse to law, and the total number of rent and title suits instituted in 1903 was only 250. Over the greater part of the district the population is extremely sparse, and it is this, no doubt, that has tended to prevent the growth of intermediate tenures between the cultivator and the zamindar. Except in the Gauripur and Karaibari estates and in pargana Taria, the man who actually tills the soil holds as a rule direct from the zamindar. The *karari* are a special class of tenant, who break up land without previous measurement, and acquire no rights over the land so broken up. The *sukbash* tenants in the Bijni estate hold at privileged rates of revenue, but are required to render certain services to their landlords. The relations between landlord and tenant seem to be satisfactory on the whole. Rents, as will be seen

from Table XIV A, are not high, and nowhere exceed Re. 1 per *bigha* for the best land cultivated with transplanted rice; while, in less favourable localities, the rate assessed is not even half that sum. Such cesses as are levied are not oppressive. In the Mechpara pargana, some opposition was of recent years aroused by the attempts of the landlord to levy a cess on forest produce removed for home consumption. No such charge is made either by Government or by the Bijni estate, and it was accordingly resented by the people.

The Santal colony. In the Guma duar, a tract of 25 square miles was reserved in 1880 for the use of Santals, who were to be settled there by members of the Norwegian Indian Home Mission to that tribe. The colonists pay no revenue for the land occupied by their homesteads, and *rupit* and *faringati* land can be held free of revenue for the first year. In the second year they pay half the ordinary rates, and in the third year the full rates for the duar. In June 1904, the total number of colonists was 2,400 persons, who held nearly 3,200 acres of land or about one-fifth of the total area reserved for them. The people live in excellent houses, and the general appearance of their villages is one of quite unusual prosperity.

Wages. The daily wages of an ordinary cooly range from 4 to 6 annas a day, but labour of this kind is not easily obtainable. Farm labourers are often paid in kind. Servants are usually paid from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per mensem, in addition to their food. Advances are also given to induce them to take service.

Prices.

The abstract in the margin shows the average number of seers of common rice to be purchased for a rupee in each of the four decades ending with 1902. This

Average.		Seers per rupee.
1863-1872	...	... 20·5
1873-1882	...	.. 17·1
1883-1892	...	... 15·1
1893-1902	...	.. 11·9

statement shows a progressive rise in price, but the low average of the last decade is principally due to the fact that it includes several years in which famine was raging in India. In February 1904 and 1905, common rice was selling at Dhubri at the rate of 16 seers to the rupee. As the immense bulk of the population are cultivators, it is clear, that, so long as the local harvest is a good one, they do not suffer from a rise in prices. Since the reduction of the salt tax in 1903, the price of salt has fallen from 10 seers to 12 seers, for the rupee. Pulse is fairly steady at Rs. 2-8 the maund. Further details with regard to prices will be found in Table X.

Food and dress.

The staple food of the people is boiled rice eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet. Goats' flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable and is frequently procurable. The animistic tribes are very fond of pork, and consume large quantities of a strong fermented beer prepared from rice.

Sweatmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and ghi. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhoti* or waist-cloth, with a

big shawl or wrapper, and generally a cotton coat or waist-coat. Hindu and Muhammadan women wear a *sari* or piece of cotton cloth, 15 feet long and 4 feet broad, which is fastened round the waist to form a petticoat and then brought over the head and shoulder so as to cover the rest of the body. Mech and Rabha women wear a smock drawn tightly across the bust and reaching half way down the calf. Men generally go bareheaded, but sometimes twist a handkerchief round their heads when working in the fields, and on sunny and rainy days have recourse to leaf umbrellas. Wooden sandals are in great request amongst all sections of the community.

Dwellings. The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally separated from the village path by a ditch or bank, on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside there is a patch of beaten earth, which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses which are often little more than huts. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and areca nut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum family covering the ground. The effect is extremely picturesque, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the whole place very damp and excludes all sun and air. At the back, there is generally a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and other plants are grown. The walls of the house are made of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo; the roof, of thatch, the rafters and the posts of bamboo. The general standard of

architecture is far from high, but Hindus and Muhammadans generally occupy somewhat larger and better built houses than those that are usually seen in Upper Assam, and the houses of the Muhammadans are sometimes quite commodious. The houses of the middle class are built on practically the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo. The furniture of the ordinary cultivator is very simple, and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell metal utensils, glass bottles and earthen pots and pans. His bedding is a quilt made out of old clothes, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses.

Economic condition of people.

Indebtedness is reported by the local officers to be fairly common, but it is probably in few cases that it is of a serious character. The rate of interest charged is said to vary from 12 to 60 per cent. per annum. Money is usually borrowed to pay for cattle, or marriage or *sradh* ceremonies, or, as a temporary expedient, to satisfy the demands of the rent collector. Cash is generally obtained by the sale of paddy, mustard, or jute, or by working in the forests. In this respect the position of the Goalpara raiyat is not so satisfactory as that of the inhabitants of Upper Assam, as there is no garden population to absorb his surplus produce. The natives of the district seldom work as coolies. They supplied only a very small part of the labour engaged in the construction of the railway, and the number

of Meches, Rabhas, or Kacharis who go to the tea gardens of Assam Proper is very small.

Conventional restrictions.

The people suffer from comparatively few conventional restrictions, other than those common to all Hindus. The Muhammadans do not plough upon a Friday. The Hindus abstain in the same way on the day when the moon is new and full, and on the last day of the month. In Bijni it is said that the villagers begin to transplant their *roa* paddy on a Wednesday or a Thursday, and to sow the *ashu* on a Tuesday or a Saturday. The last two days are, however, considered unsuitable for house building, and some hold that they are equally inauspicious for the transplantation of paddy.

Means of communication.

Steamer.

In the early days of our occupation of the Province communications with the outer world were usually maintained by water. The dak from Calcutta came overland *via* Rangpur, but the road was almost impassable in the rains. Boats took from twenty-five to thirty-five days to go from Goalpara to Calcutta, while the journey up stream occupied some eight days longer.*

This was the state of things till 1848, when the Government steamers were first deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. The experiment was attended with success, and, in 1860, the India General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks to Assam. Passengers were carried by these boats, but the journey, though not uncomfortable, was still tedious and uncertain. In

* McCosh's topography of Assam page 9.

1884, a daily service of mail steamers was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri. From Dhubri a steamer plied to Jatrapur, which had been connected by rail with Calcutta in 1884. The ports of call in the Goalpara district are Dhubri, Bilasipara, Goalpara, and Dalgoma. At the present day (1905), a through steamer carrying the mails runs every day from Dhubri to Gauhati, and from Gauhati to Dhubri. Another vessel plies daily in each direction between Goalundo and Dibrugarh, and calls at all the ports in the Goalpara district. Large cargo steamers with attendant flats also visit these places at stated intervals. Cargo is carried by the smaller passenger boats as well as by the larger steamers, but the freights charged are naturally somewhat higher. These steamers are owned and managed by the India General Steam Navigation Company, and the Rivers Steam Navigation Company.

Railways. In 1902, Dhubri was connected with Calcutta by rail. The line, which is a branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, enters the district at the Bishkhoa Nadi, and passes by the stations of Golakganj, Balajan, and Gauripur before reaching Dhubri. From Golakganj a line is now under construction which will pass through the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup till it reaches the Brahmaputra at a point opposite Gauhati, the present terminus of the Assam Valley branch of the Assam Bengal Railway. There will be stations in Goalpara district at Basbari, Tipkai Sisapani, Fakiragram, Kokrajhar, Basugaon, Abhayapuri, and Bijni, but no portion of this line is as yet (1905) open to traffic.

The roads on the north bank.

Two trunk roads run through the district. The north trunk road starts from Dhubri, and runs in a sweeping curve first west and then east, but always chiefly north, to Kachugaon nearly 50 miles away. There are inspection bungalows at the following places, the figures in brackets indicate the length of the stage. Balajan (10 miles), Paglarhat ($9\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Dingdinga ($10\frac{3}{4}$ miles), and Kachugaon ($19\frac{1}{2}$ miles). At the latter place the road turns sharply to the east, and runs through the Eastern Duars to Raha in Kamrup. There are inspection bungalows at the following places; Saralbhanga (11 miles), Garubhasa ($8\frac{1}{2}$ miles) Sidli (6 miles), Papragaon (9 miles), Bijni (8 miles), and Raha ($10\frac{3}{4}$ miles). An alternative route from Dhubri runs close to the Brahmaputra to Bilasipara, and thence, through Chapar and North Salmara, to Raha. There are inspection bungalows at the following places; Manipur ($17\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Bilasipara ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Chapar (17 miles), North Salmara (16 miles), and Raha ($17\frac{1}{2}$ miles). From Bilasipara a road runs north which presently divides into two branches. The western arm joins the trunk road a little to the west of Patgaon or Saralbhanga. The eastern branch meets it at Garubhasa. On the former there are inspection bungalows at Sasargaon (10 miles), and Datma (10 miles), on the latter at Kokrajhar (14 miles). Another road runs north from Jogighopa through North Salmara, till it meets the trunk road near the point at which it crosses the river Ai. Access to Bengal is given by two roads which take off, the one at Kachugaon, the other near

Pratapganj. There is an inspection bungalow on the former road at a point 13½ miles west of Kachugaon, and on the latter road at Agamani.

Roads south of the Brahmaputra. South of the Brahmaputra a road runs from Manikarchar, past Fakirganj opposite Dhubri, to Dhupdhara on the borders of Kamrup. There are inspection bungalows at Kharuyabadha, Patakata, and Fakirganj. East of Fakirganj the road is known as the south trunk road, and is supplied with inspection bungalows at the following stages, Langrabhita (9 miles), Lakhipur (10¼ miles), Baida (9½ miles) Agia (10¼ miles), Krishnai (8¼ miles), Rangjuli (16¾ miles), and Dhupdhara (in Kamrup 8½ miles) Goalpara town is connected with this trunk road, by roads that meet it at Agia, and at a point a little to the west of Krishnai. Another road runs from Damra to the Brahmaputra near Dalgoma. Minor roads to which no reference has been made are shown on the map appended to the Gazetteer. Altogether there were in the district in 1904, 159½ miles of road kept up by the Public Works Department, and 356 miles maintained by the Local Boards. None of these roads are metalled, and they are thus liable to be much cut up if asked to carry heavy traffic in the rains. Many of the minor streams are spanned by good wooden bridges, but no less than 140 ferries are still maintained. Steam ferries ply across the Brahmaputra between Dhubri and Fakirganj and Goalpara and Jogighopa.

Post and telegraph. The following statement shows that there has been

a large development of postal business in Goalpara since 1871.

Number of post-offices in.		Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in.			Number of Savings Bank accounts in.		Balance at the credit of the depositors.	
1875-76	1903-04.	1861-62	1870-71.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04.
12	34	32	60	478	29	1,636	800	2,96,000

The Savings Bank has also made satisfactory progress and considering the low rate of interest allowed, the volume of deposits is considerable. The figures given for 1872 were returned after the bank had only been opened for a few months.

The mail is brought from Calcutta by the Eastern Bengal State Railway up to Dhubri, and is distributed, as a rule by runners, over the district. A list of the post and telegraph offices in Goalpara will be found in the appendix.

The principal articles exported from the district are timber, mustard seed, jute, hides, unhusked rice, fish, silk cloth, betel nuts, cotton, and lac. The last two articles come for the most part from the Garo Hills and only pass through Goalpara. The articles received in exchange are European piece goods, salt, hardware, oil, tobacco, gram and pulse, flour, sugar, molasses, spices, bell metal utensils, and umbrellas. The principal centres of trade are Goalpara, Gauripur, Dhubri, Trade.

Manikarchar, Bilasipara, and Bagribari. Jute is also exported in considerable quantities from Patamari. Nearly all the wealthiest and most important merchants are Marwaris. The bulk of the export and import trade passes through their hands, and, in addition to this, they do a considerable retail business. In the larger marts there are shops kept by Muhammadans from Eastern Bengal, who sell grain, salt, oil, spices, lamps, cloths, stationery, and general haberdashery. Salt, oil, grain, umbrellas, and piece goods are the ordinary stock in trade of the village shopkeeper. The natives of the district have only succeeded in appropriating a comparatively small share of the retail trade, and the great majority of the shopkeepers are Marwaris, Bengalis, or Up-countrymen. A list of all towns or villages in which there are three or more permanent shops will be found in the appendix.

Markets and fairs.

Internal trade is largely carried on at markets, to which the villagers come with the produce of their farms. In the Eastern Duars this trade is generally carried on by barter. Boat loads of dried fish and earthen pots are brought up the rivers in the rains, and exchanged for unhusked rice. The rate of exchange is fixed by a panchayat. Dried fish fetches from twelve to twenty times its weight in paddy, and five or six seers of paddy are given for each pot. A list of the villages in which markets are held is appended to this volume. In addition to these markets there are a few fairs, held on the occasion of religious festivals. A list of these fairs is given below, but none of them are of

very much inportance.

Name of place at which fair is held.	Pargana in which situated.	Date on which held.	Estimated number of people attending.
Chhatrasal ...	Ghurlla	Middle of March ...	25,000
Dalgoma ..	Habraghat ...	End of January or beginning of February.	7C0 or 800
Dhubri ...	Jamira ...	Middle of April ..	5,000
Gauripur ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	3 000
Do. ...	Do. ...	Middle of July ...	3,000

The greater part of the total trade still enters and leaves the district by water, and much of it is carried by country boat. The rivers also take a very prominent part in the distribution of the internal trade of the district.

The transfrontier trade carried on with Bhutan is of very small importance, and the total annual value does not exceed six or seven thousand rupees. The principal import is rubber, the principal export silk.

Towns Dhubri. The only three places in the district that are worthy of the name of town are Dhubri, Goalpara, and Gauripur. Dhubri is situated on the right bank of the Brahmaputra in 26° 1′ N. and 89° 59′ E., at the point where the river turns south to enter the plains of Bengal. The town is connected by rail with Calcutta, and is a port of call for the river steamers, while a steam ferry which plies on the Brahmaputra connects it with the trunk road that runs along the south bank of the river

up to Saikhoa. It is thus favourably placed as regards communications, but the development of the town is hindered by the fact that it occupies a small spit of land, about one-third of a square mile in area, which suffers severely from the erosive action of the Brahmaputra. The population shows no tendency to increase, and was 2,893 in 1881; 4,825 in 1891; and 3,737 in 1901. The headquarters of the district were trans ferred from Goalpara to Dhubri in 1879. In addition to the usual public offices the town contains a smal church, a jail which has accommodation for 34 persons, a high school, a public library, a town hall, and a marble statue of Queen Victoria. There is a considerable export trade in jute, but business is tending to leave the place for other centres, such as Bagribari and Gauripur, as merchants are unwilling to sink money in warehouses on ground which is liable to be carried away by the river.

Dhubri was constituted a municipality under Act V (B. C.) of 1876, and subsequently Act III (B. C.) of 1884 was extended to the town in 1901. There are ten municipal commissioners, six of whom are elected, two are nominated, and two are ex-officio members. The principal sources of income are a tax on holdings at the rate of 6½ per cent. of their annual value, a latrine rate, and the fees levied in the municipal market. Details will be found in Table XVII. There are nearly 7 miles of road within municipal limits, 2½ of which are metalled. Drinking water is obtaind from the Br ahmaputra, and from three public and ten private wells. The

town is well lighted and in spite of its small size has no less than 52 lamps.

Goalpara.

Goalpara is the largest town in the district, and is situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in 26°,10′ N. and 90°,38′ E. Prior to 1879 it was the headquarters of the district, and since the transfer the population of the town has shown no tendency to increase. The figures recorded at the three last enumerations were ; 1881, 6,697 ; 1891, 5,440 ; 1901, 6,287.

In addition to the magistrate's court, the public buildings include a small jail, a high school, a hospital with eighteen beds, post and telegraph offices, a police station, and a circuit house. Nearly all of these buildings are situated on a hill, whose summit is 400 feet above the level of the sea. This hill is surrounded on two sides by the Brahmaputra, and commands a fine view across the valley of that river, which at this point is much broken up by outlying ranges of hills. The native town is situated on the plain to the west of the hill, and, after the earthquake of 1897, sank below flood level. Embankments, fitted with sluice gates, have recently been erected, which protect the town from the floods of the Brahmaputra. The lower parts are, however, waterlogged by accumulations of rain water, which cannot be drained off till the river falls, and the shops and houses present a somewhat dilapidated appearance.

Goalpara was constituted a municipality under Act V (B. C.) of 1876 in 1878. There are nine municipal commissioners, eight of whom are elected by the rate payers. From Table XVII it will be seen that about

one-third of the municipal income was derived from a tax on persons, but the total income in 1900-01 was less than Rs. 7,000. The town covers an area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, and is served by $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles of metalled and $10\frac{1}{4}$ miles of unmetalled road. Drinking water is obtained from the Brahmaputra, from three tanks, six masonry wells, and a large number of private water holes.

Gauripur. Gauripur is a flourishing little town on the right bank of the Gadadhar river about five miles north of Dhubri. The zamindar of the Gauripur estate has a fine house here, and there is a high school, a dispensary, and a post and telegraph office. There is a considerable settlement of Marwari merchants, who do a large trade in jute, mustard seed, and piece goods, and there are blacksmiths, wheelwrights, potters, goldsmiths, confectioners, and the full complement of shopkeepers and artizans found in a small Indian town. There is also a large daily bazar where the ordinary products of the country can be obtained. The wants of the outer as well as of the inner man are not forgotten, and there are fifteen or sixteen sewing machines in the bazar which are diligently used for the manufacture of cheap clothing.

Local Boards In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a

committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large and in 1875-76, the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day. The Deputy Commissioner is chairman of the board of the head quarters subdivision; the Goalpara board is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all local roads within their jurisdiction, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial funds. The principal

heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVI. The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. Estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board overseers.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue. The permanently settled estates—History of the great Zamindaries—The Eastern Duars—Land revenue collection—Town lands—Excise—Opium—Country spirit—Laopani—Ganja—Income tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Criminal and Civil Justice—Registration—Police—Jails—Education—Medical—Vital statistics—Surveys.

Land revenue: the permanently settled estates.

For the purposes of land revenue administration Goalpara consists of two distinct tracts, (1) the area covered by the jurisdiction of the three thanas of Goalpara, Dhubri, and Karaibari, as that jurisdiction stood in 1822; and (2) the Eastern Duars, which are situated in the north of the district and were annexed in 1864, after the failure of Mr. Eden's Mission to Bhutan.

The history of the permanently settled estates is closely bound up with the history of the district, and of the great families of landlords. After the downfall

of the Koch kingdom and the withdrawal of Mir Jumla from Assam in 1663 A. D., the Manas was fixed as the eastern limit of the Musalman dominions. The greater part of Goalpara seems to have been originally held at a low rate of tribute by the descendants of the Koch king, Parikshit, and, though they were no longer in theory independent princes, the Koch zamindars must have been princes in almost everything but name. Might, however, was largely right in a frontier district in those troublous times, and various other chieftains succeeded in securing broad tracts of territory for themselves.

A very light assessment was imposed upon these zamindars. They were lords of the marches, and from people of that class it has never been the practice in any age to require heavy contributions towards the exchequer of the central government. The assessment on the Bijni estate was originally fixed at Rs. 5,998, which was afterwards commuted to an annual contribution of 68 elephants. The zamindars of Karaibari, Kalumalupara, and Ghurla similarly paid their dues in cotton.* When the British acquired the *dewani* of the district, this tribute was accepted as land revenue. No settlement in detail was ever made, and it is doubtful whether Goalpara was included in the great decennial settlement which was made permanent in 1793. Government has not, however, thought fit to dispute the title of the zamindars.

* Vide Mills' Report on Assam and a note by Mr. Forbes in 1875, of which an abstract has been given in a paper by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S, on the Koch Kings of Kamrupa, in J. A. S. B., Vol. LXII, part 1, No. 4. 1893.

The following statement gives details with regard to the various permanently settled estates :— Details of Estates.

Name of Proprietor.	Name of Estate.	Area in sq. miles.	Estimated cultivated area in acres.	Revenue demand.
				Rs. A. P.
Bijni Rani	Habraghat and Khuntaghat	942·63	102.478	2,355-1 0
Gauripur Raja	Ghurla, Jamira, Makrampur, and Aurangabad ...	423·54	147,006	3,299-11-0
	Kalumalupara	54·98	17 787	1,706-11-0
	Gola Alamganj	13 24	569	21 6-0
	Kayarpar	...	11	13-8-0
	Noabad Faturi	2·69	1,431	11-12-0
	Dhubri	..	...	25 10-0
	Total ...	494·45	166.8[illegible]4	5,078-10-0
Mechpara Zamindars ..	Mechpara	399·21	37,163	2,1 5-10-0
	Taluk Goalpara	..	1 680	59-14-0
	Dekdhoa	...	73	25-0-0
	Dhar Brahmaputra ..	...	118	45-0-0
	Total ...	399·21	3[illegible],034	2 235-8-0
Chapar Zamindar ...	Chapar Kashba Gila ...	201·49	11,248	603-13 0
	Kajipara	..	442	22-6 0
	Tetal ...	201·49	11 690	626-3-0
Parbatjoar Zamindars ..	Parbatjoar	275·89	18,962	547-10-0
Karaibari Zamindars ...	Karaibari 12 annas share ..	50·84	13,246	... *
	Do. 4 annas share ...	...	1,971	... *
	Total ..	50·84	15,217	...
Gauripur and Parbatjoar Zamindars	Taria	19·11	9,671	98-7-0
	Settled invalid Lakhiraj Uchita, etc.	..	2,866	447-3-0
	Resumed Lakhiraj Khalisha Kuri, etc.	..	40	21-15-0
	Total ...	19·11	12,577	567-9 0
	Grand Total ...	2,383·62	366,762	11,410-9-0

* The compensation paid by Government on account of loss of market dues exceeds the land revenue assessed.

There are altogether 19 permanently settled estates covering an area of 2,384 square miles, which are distributed amongst six families of landlords. By far the largest area is held by the Bijni family, and when the district is more densely peopled this estate will become extremely valuable. At the present moment the Gauripur Raja has a larger rent-roll. The total land revenue demand on these estates is Rs. 11,411, or less than half a farthing per acre. Government, moreover, pays the zamindars Rs. 8,556 as compensation for the abolition of market dues and other illegal cesses, so that the net revenue is only Rs. 2,855 or a little more than a rupee per square mile. Local rates are, however, assessed at the rate of two annas for every acre under cultivation, and at the rate of one anna in the rupee on the actual profits, if any, obtained from land that is lying waste. Included in the area of 2,384 square miles of permanently settled land there are 40 estates, covering an area of 99,055 acres, which are held free of revenue.

The Bijni family.

The following table shows that the Bijni family is decended from the great Koch king, Viswa Singh, who died in 1534 A.D.; though failure of heirs has more than once prevented the direct transmission of the blood.*

Viswa Singh ob: 1534 A. D.
- Nar Narayan. ancestor of Raja of Kuch Bihar.
- Silarai.
  - Raghu Rai ob: 1593 A. D.
    - Parikshit ob: 1614 A. D.
      - Vijita Narayan †R
        - Joy Narayan R
          - Haro Narayan ancestor of Beltala Rajas.
          - Sib Narayan R
            - Bejoy Narayan R
              - Debi Narayan
              - Mukund Narayan R ob 1788 A. D.
            - Hem Narayan
              - Hari Deb Narayan R
                - Name not given R
                  - Balit Narayan R
                    - Indra Narayan R
                      - Amrita Narayan R = Bhaggeswari R
                        - (adopted son) Kumud Narayan Bhup R = Siddheswari R
                          (Present Rani) = Abhayeswari R

N.B.—The letter R signifies Raja or Rani of Bijni.

* The accounts of the Goalpara Zamindars have been condensed from reports received from their representatives.

† So Mr. Gait in the Koch Kings of Kamarupa. Indra Narayan places Chandra Narayan between Parikshit and Joy Narayan.

History of the estate.

The history of the Bijni family is the history of a line, which gradually declined from the proud position of a powerful sovereign prince, to the comfortable, though less dignified status of a wealthy zamindar. The fortunes of the Koch kings down to the time of Parikshit have already been described. Parikshit's son, Vijita, is said to have been an infant at the time of his father's death, and during his minority the Ahom king took possession of Kamrup. A large tract of country in the western division of Raghu Rai's old kingdom, was conferred by the Emperor on one Kabi Shekhar Barua, the founder of the Gauripur family, and Vijita thus obtained but a portion of the inheritance of his forefathers. Sib Narayan, the second in descent from Vijita added, however, to the family estates by seizing the Bijni Duar, which he appears to have held at a low quit rent from the Raja of Bhutan. About the middle of the eighteenth century, during the minority of Debi Narayan and Mukund Narayan, Mechpara and Chapar were formed into separate zamindaries, and the Bijni estates assumed their present form. Amrita Narayan left no heir, and was succeeded by his wife Bhaggeswari, who adopted Kumud Narayan Bhup. He too died childless, and was succeeded by his two wives. The elder Rani died in 1891, and the younger wife is the present Rani of Bijni.

Area and resources of estate.

The Bijni estate consists of the two parganas of Habraghat and Khuntaghat, which cover an area of 943 square miles and are permanently settled for the

peppercorn revenue of Rs. 2,355.* It has already been explained that the revenue was originally fixed at Rs. 5,998, and that it was subsequently commuted to a contribution of 68 elephants. Great difficulty was, however, experienced in realizing the total number of elephants due, and, in 1788, this payment in kind was commuted to a small cash revenue. Habraghat consists of that portion of the district which lies south of the Brahmaputra and east of Goalpara town, Khuntaghat lies north of the river, and is bounded on the east by the Manas, on the north by Bijni Duar, and on the west by Parbatjoar. The Bijni Raja has also certain claims to 203 square miles in the Bijni Duar, on which there is at present assessed a revenue of Rs. 27,383. The local rates assessed on Habraghat and Khuntaghat are eight times the land revenue, and amount to Rs. 18,970; while in the Bijni Duar they are only Rs. 2,189. The rent roll of the former estate is said to be approximately Rs. 1,35,000, and of the latter Rs. 39,300. The rent roll thus exceeds the Government demand on account of land revenue and cesses by at least 1¼ lakhs of rupees. The Bijni Raja does not, however, depend entirely on his rent roll for his income, and he obtains considerable sums from his forests and fisheries, and from the thatching grass, grazing, markets, potters earth, and lac mahals. The rajbari is situated at Abhayapuri about three miles from North Salmara.

Chapar Zamindari.

In comparison with Bijni, the Chapar zamindari is a comparatively small estate. It is situated in parganas

* Certain lakhiraj estates in these parganas are, however, held by the Gauripur zamindar.

Chapar and Kasba Gilla, and covers rather more than 200 square miles. The greater part of pargana Chapar consists of *chur* land lying on either side of the Brahmaputra, and only a small portion of the total area of the zamindari is at present under cultivation. The land revenue assessed is Rs. 626-3 and the local rates Rs. 1,638. The total rent roll of the estate is said to be between twenty-five and thirty thousand rupees, and, in addition to this, the zamindars derive a certain amount of profit from their fisheries and forests. The Chapar family are descended from a Rarhi Brahman, named Joy Narayan Sarma, who was a native of the Kishorganj subdivision of Mymensingh. This man obtained a grant of the estates from the Mughals, and the present zamindar, Babu Indra Narayan Chaudhury, is the eighth in succession to him. He was, however, only the adopted son of his predecessor. The family home is situated at Bilasipara.

The Gauripur family.

The Gauripur family is said to be descended from a Kayastha, who migrated from Tirhoot to Goalpara about the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D. The first member of the family of whom anything definite is known, was Kabi Sekhar, who succeeded his father in 1658, A.D. He seems to have been a man of some intelligence and enterprise, and was made *Dewan* by the Mughal Emperor. In this capacity he gave satisfaction to his royal master, and he subsequently received the title of Raja and a *lakhiraj* grant of 70,000 *bighas* of land. For three generations after Kabi Sekhar, father was followed by son, but, though the post of Kanungo was held by all, they do not appear to have distinguished

themselves in any way. Boal Chandra Barua, who succeeded to the headship of the family in 1778, acquired the zamindari of the five parganas of Ghurla, Aurungabad, Makrampur, Jamira, and Gola Alamganj. This in itself was a magnificent estate, but it was still further enlarged by Boal's grandson, Dhir Chandra Barua, who purchased parganas Kalumalupara, Noabad Faturi, and Dhubri, and a share in the Taria pargana. Dhir Chandra's son, Pratap Chandra Barua, did good service in the Bhutan war, and was made a Rai Bahadur in 1867. He made further additions to the estate, and in 1869 generously made over to Government the greater portion of pargana Dhubri when it was proposed to transfer the head quarters of the district to that place. He died without heirs in 1880, and the present zamindar, Kumar Prabhat Chandra Barua, was adopted by his widow. This young man attained his majority in 1896, and received the title of Raja as a personal distinction in 1901. The present Raja is a liberal and enlightened landlord. He has founded an excellent public library at Dhubri, and maintains a high school and dispensary at Gauripur, and a dispensary at Agamani.

Area and resources of estate

The Gauripur estate lies in the western portion of the district. It includes the seven entire parganas of Ghurla, Jamira, Makrampur, Gola Alamganj, Noabad Faturi, Kalumalupara, and Aurangabad, with part of Taria, and certain *lakhiraj* estates in parganas Habraghat and Khuntaghat. The total area is about 55 square miles, which pays to Government Rs. 5,299 as land revenue, and Rs. 25,337 as local rates. The rent roll is

said to amount to Rs. 2,34,000, and the miscellaneous revenue derived from forests and other sources to nearly Rs. 32,000 per annum. About two thirds of the estate is already under cultivation, but upwards of 160 square miles are still lying waste.

The Karaibari zamindars.

The present zamindars of Karaibari obtained their estates in 1809 A. D., when the zamindaris of that turbulent frontier chieftain, Mahendra Narayan, were attached for arrears of revenue and sold. The auction purchaser was one Rama Nath Lahiri, prime minister of Kuch Bihar, and it is from him that the present holders take their title.

The estates cover an area of 51 square miles, and pay a land revenue of Rs. 3,267. It is hardly, however, correct to say that any land revenue is paid, as Government makes an annual grant to the zamindars of Rs. 3,868, as compensation for the abolition of market dues, and the estate is thus a positive charge upon the general revenues of the country. The local rates at present (1904) assessed amount to Rs. 2,105. The estate has been partitioned into a twelve anna and a four anna share. The owners, who are a Brahman family, do not reside in the Goalpara district.

The Mechpara estate.

The Mechpara estate covers are area of 399 square miles, and is situated in the Mechpara pargana. This pargana occupies the strip of country lying between the Brahmaputra and the Garo Hills, and is roughly bounded on the east and west by lines drawn south from Goalpara and Dhubri towns. The land revenue assessed is Rs. 2,235-8 and the local rates Rs. 5,557-8. The total

rent roll is said to be about Rs. 1,30,000, and, in addition to this, the landlords derive a considerable income from their sal forests. The seat of the family is at Lakhipur.

The Parbatjoar estate. The Parbatjoar estate covers an area of 276 square miles, and is situated in the pargana of that name, which lies north of the Brahmaputra and west of Khuntaghat. The land revenue assessed is Rs. 547-10, the local rates Rs. 8,579-7, and the income from the estate, including the profits derived from fisheries and timber, is said to amount to nearly Rs. 1,50,000. As the area of land at present under cultivation is said to be only about 21,000 acres, the rent-roll is presumbly responsible for less than half the total income of the zamindars. The family is said to be descended from one Hatibar Chaudhury who received a grant of the estate twelve generations ago. An eight anna share is at present held by Babu Surendra Narayan Singh Chaudhury whose residence is at Bagribari, a five anna share is held by Srimoti Bimola Sundari Chaudurani who lives at Rupsi, and a three anna share by Srimoti Susila Sundari Chaudurani whose home is in Calcutta.

The Sidli Raja. The Sidli Raja is not in possession of any permanently settled estates, but at the time of the annexation of the Bhutan Duars, he laid claim to the Duar from which he takes his name.

According to the family traditions the founder of the line was a Kshattriya named Chikna Narayan, who was adopted by a certain Raja of Sidli, named Bhim Singh. The descendants of this man were in the habit of paying tribute, first to the Mughal Emperor, and afterwards to the Hon'ble East India Company. About 1784, the

Bhutias seemed to have succeeded in imposing their suzereignty upon the Sidli Rajas, and continued to receive tribute from them till the outbreak of the Bhutan war. On the conclusion of that war the Duars were annexed by the British. The arrangements that were made for the satisfaction of the Sidli Raja's claims, are described in the following paragraphs.

The Eastern Duars. The Eastern Duars are five in number, and are situated in the following order going from east to west,—Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu, and Guma which lies south of Ripu. When the Duars were annexed by the British in 1864, the Bijni Raja laid claim to the Bijni Duar, on the ground that he had occupied the position of hereditary proprietor of this estate under the Bhutan Government. Similar claims were put forward to the whole of the Sidli Duar by the Sidli Raja. After a careful enquiry had been made into the validity of these claims, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Grey, stated that he had no doubt that the Rajas of Sidli and Bijni had for many generations held that sort of position and enjoyed those rights and pivileges which must be recognised as giving them the status of hereditary zamindars. He accordingly declared that they were entitled as zamindars to a settlement of the estates which they had managed and possessed under the Bhutan Government.* Settlement for a period of seven years was, accordingly, made in 1870 with the Sidli Raja, and with the Court of Wards on behalf of the minor Raja of Bijni. The Sidli Raja proved to be negligent and incapable, and after the first year the management

* Vide letter from Bengal Government No. 3594, dated 20th September 1867.

of the Duar was resumed by Government, 20 per cent. of the collections being allowed to him as *malikana.* On the expiry of this settlement the question was raised as to the area which could reasonably be considered to form the acknowledged estates of the two Rajas.

In 1882, the Government of India decided that 130,000, acres should be assigned to the Raja of Bijni and 170,000 acres to the Sidli Raja. In 1885, settlement was offered to the two zamindars for ten years at 80 per cent. of the rental for 1885-86, but the offer was refused. The Duars, accordingly, continued under Government management, the Sidli Raja receiving 20 per cent. and the Bijni Raja 7½ per cent. of the collections. In 1900, settlement was again offered, and on this occasion was accepted by both of the families concerned, but before the lease could be executed the Sidli Raja died. His successor did not wish to undertake the responsibilities of management, and the original arrangement under which Government remained in charge of the estate and paid 20 per cent. of the collections to the zamindar was allowed to continue. In April 1903, a lease for ten years expiring on March 31st 1911, was issued to the Bijni Rani for her estates in the Bijni Duar. The lessor is required to pay 80 per cent. of the revenue demand of 1900-1901, and is allowed to appropriate any profits that may accrue from extension of cultivation during the term of the lease, but no rebate will be allowed, merely because the rent roll happens to decline. The levy of all *abwabs* or other cesses, and of all transit dues is forbidden, but the landlord has the right of enhancement of rent

according to the provisions of the rent law. The population is, however, so sparse that it is doubtful whether much enhancement would be possible.

Settlement of the Duars. The first settlement of the Eastern Duars was made by Mr. Beckett in 1872. The rates assessed were very moderate. In Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, and Ripu, they were only Re. 1-8-0 per acre of homestead or transplanted rice land, and 12 annas an acre for all other kinds of land. In Guma, they were even lower, and were Re. 1, per acre for the former, and Annas 8 per acre for the latter class of land.

The Ripu Duar was settled with the Chapar zamindar, and Chirang with the zamindar of Gauripur, but, when the leases ran out, they were not renewed, and settlement was made, as in Assam Proper, direct with the actual cultivators. In 1893, the rates in the portion of Guma, which lies west of the forest reserves and is inhabited by Rajbansis, were raised to Rs. 3 per acre for homestead, Rs. 1-14 per acre for land growing transplanted rice, and Re. 1-8 per acre for land under other crops. Elsewhere the rates assessed are the same as those imposed in 1872. The following statement shows the settled area of each Duar in that year and in 1903-04 :—

Duar.	Settled Area.		Total Area.	Population 1901.
	1872.	1903-04		
	acres.	acres.	Acres.	
Bijni	23,003	25,851	239,482	25,859
Sidli	20,932	33,542	230,790	31,509
Chirang	933	817	316,890	1,081
Ripu	2,194	1,956	154,893	2,425
Guma	4,181	10,849	62,694	11,198
Total ...	51,243	73,015	1,004,749	72,072

The Duars are a very unprogressive portion of the district. The great mass of the population are Meches, who are still in a very primitive and undeveloped state, communications, except for the rivers, are bad, there are hardly any markets, and not much trade except in timber from the Government reserves. The surplus produce of the Duars is bartered with merchants who come up the rivers with boat loads of pottery and dried fish, and the rate of exchange is generally very favourable to the trader. The rates of revenue as compared with Assam Proper are distinctly low, but, in view of the backward condition of the people and the country, Government has taken no steps for their enhancement.

Land revenue collection.

For the purpose of the collection of the land revenue the Duars which are still under the direct management of Government, are divided into five mauzas. Chirang and Ripu and Guma form two mauzas. Sidli is divided into three. Nearly four-fifths of the settled area has been cadastrally surveyed, and the maintenance of the land records is entrusted to a staff of 33 mandals under two supervisor kanungoes and a sub-deputy collector.

Town lands.

The town of Dhubri originally covered an area of 875 *bighas* distributed as follows. A portion of the permanently settled estates of the Gauripur zamindar, generously surrendered to Government in 1869, 197 *bighas*; a resumed *lakhiraj* estate, 604 *bighas*; a portion of Bidyapara *lakhiraj* estate, 60 *bighas*; three other small *lakhirai* estates 5 *bighas*; portion reserved by

the Gauripur zamindar 8 *bighas*. About one-fourth of this area has, however, been removed by the erosive action of the river. The town was settled for a period of thirty years with effect from April 1899. The rates assessed per acre vary from Rs. 21, rising to Rs. 30 in in the eleventh year, to Rs. 9. Practically the whole of the land suitable for trade sites was settled *en bloc* with the Municipality for ten years in 1895. The area of this land is about 30 *bighas*, the revenue assessed Rs 5 per *bigha*. The Municipality have spent a large sum in improving the site, and have sublet the land for Rs 20 per *bigha* with a premium of Rs. 500 per *bigha*. A large portion of the land was, however, reserved for the municipal market. Under the rules now in force waste land taken up for the first time within town limits is to be settled ordinarily for a term of thirty years, at a fair rent not exceeding the annual letting value of the site. The lease of the land applied for may, if the Deputy Commissioner think fit, be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder.

Excise. Table XII shows the receipts obtained in the district in 1890-91, and in 1900-01 and subsequent years from the various heads of excise. The inhabitants of the district are unusually temperate. They consume very little opium or ganja, and are fairly moderate in the use of country spirit.* How marked is the difference between the eastern and western end of the Assam Valley can be judged from the fact that, though the population

*The contrast between this marked temperance, and the extraordinary prevalence of insanity is note-worthy.

of Lakhimpur in 1901 was only about four-fifths of that of Goalpara, the excise revenue of Lakhimpur in 1903-04 was more than eight times as great. The principal cause of this remarkable difference is the enormous quantity of opium consumed in Lakhimpur.

Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy. The evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable and in that year poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This was raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the price at which it now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883, the right to sell opium in a particular mahal was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74, there were in the district 250 shops for the retail vend of opium; thirty years later there were only 24. Opium.

The figures in the margin show that there has been an extraordinary decrease in the quantity of opium consumed in the district. At the

	Maunds.
1873-74 ...	... 84
1879-80 ...	... 29
1889-90 ...	.. 22
1899-1900	... 8

present day the amount is insignificant, but at no time was the drug really popular in Goalpara. In 1873-74, the number of maunds consumed was not much more than one fifth of the number in Lakhimpur, though the latter district had not one third of the population of Goalpara. The reduction in the number of retail shops and the imposition of a heavy duty, seem to have succeeded in almost killing out a habit which had never taken a firm hold upon the people. Opium is not a popular drug in North Eastern Bengal, of which Goalpara really forms a part, and in 1901-02 only 8 maunds were issued in the neighbouring district of Jalpaiguri, and 52 maunds in Rangpur.

Opium is generally swallowed in the form of pills, or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made from opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually supposed to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed.

Country Spirit The still. Country spirit is manufactured by native methods, and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of

vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation dose not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed—mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers, or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers, or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

Material employed.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an

hour and three quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa the first 3½ gallons will be classed as *phul*, if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole 5½ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking 4¼ gallons of *phul* or 5¼ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

The statement in the margin shows that there has been a considerable increase in the revenue derived from country spirits. The system of auctioning the shops renders it impossible for Government to obtain its fair share

	No. of shops.	Revenue Rs.
1873-74	... 4	... 120
1879-80	... 12	... 4,060
1889-90	... 21	... 17,151
1899-1900	... 28	... 26,039

of the profits of the trade, in the absence of healthy competition at the sales; and it is to an improvement in this direction more than to anything else that the increase of revenue is due. There does not appear to be any reason for supposing that there has been any material increase of drunkenness amonst the people.

Laopani.

Laopani, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed. The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth

is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth. No attempt is made to restrict the manufacture of rice beer in moderate quantities for home use, as any attempt to do so would certainly lead to corruption and oppression. In a matter of this kind the influence of the Hindu gosains, and the pressure of local village opinion has more effect than any direct action of the Government.

Ganja. Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Assam, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage.

Income Tax. The receipts under the head of income tax in 1903-04 amounted to Rs. 25,566, nearly nine-tenths of which were obtained from the head, 'Other sources of income.' About one-half of this total was derived from estates taxable under the Act, an item which does not appear in any other district in the Province except Sylhet. These estates are various sources of miscellaneous revenue enjoyed by the zamindars, such as market tolls, receipts from timber yards, and income derived from forest produce. The bulk of the remainder was derived from 149 dealers in general goods, 36 money lenders, 26 dealers in provisions, and 13 pleaders. The receipts

under the head of income tax do not show much tendency to increase. In 1888, they amounted to Rs. 28,700, but by 1894 they had fallen to Rs. 19,700. From 1896 onwards there was an upward tendency, which reached the highest point in 1902-03, with Rs. 32,100. The decrease in the following year was due to the exempti·n of incomes between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 per annum from taxation.

Stamps.

In 1903-04, the receipts under or the head of judicial stamps in Goalpara amounted to Rs. 37,167 and for non-judicial stamps to Rs. 14,993. These figures were exceeded by every district in the plains except Darrang and Nowgong.

Public Works.

Public Works are in charge of an Executive or Assistant Engineer who is usually assisted by one upper and six lower subordinates.

The Public Works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and telegraph offices at district and sub-divisional head-quarters, circuit houses, dak bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads.

The most important roads directly under the department are the trunk road along the south bank of the Brahmaputra from the Kamrup border to Fakirganj opposite Dhubri, with its continuation to Manikarchar; and the road from Dhubri to Kachugaon.

It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering

knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the Department has to contend are the absence of an artisan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour.

Government. For general administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions. Dhubri is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, and Goalpara is entrusted to an assistant magistrate who is usually a native of the country. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed two subordinate magistrates and a sub-deputy collector as his assistants at Dhubri.

Criminal and civil justice. Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner, from orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley districts, whose head-quarters are at Gauhati. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. In 1902, there were four stipendiary magistrates in the district, who decided 717 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 2,227 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 852 cases under the Indian Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. There is not much serious crime in Goalpara, and most of the offences were either house-breaking and house-trespass or petty thefts.

The civil work of the district is not heavy and the Deputy Commissioner acts as subordinate judge, while one of the assistant magistrates in each subdivision acts

as munsif. In 1902, the subordinate judge heard 9 original cases and 18 appeals, while 1,229 cases were disposed of by the munsifs. Only a little over one-seventh of these cases were contested, and a large proportion of them were simple money suits. In spite of the fact that the greater part of the district is permanently settled the number of rent and title suits is very small. Special rules are in force for the administration of civil justice in the Eastern Duars. The Code of Civil Procedure is not in force. The rules are fit for the simple and primitive people inhabiting the tract, and provide that, unless one or other of the parties objects, civil suits should be disposed of by a village panchayat. The panchayats are chosen by the parties to the case, and the proceedings of the panchayat when endorsed by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants are final. When the parties refuse to refer their suit to the panchayat the case is tried by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants. No appeal lies as a matter of right from the decision of the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants, but the Commissioner of the Assam Valley districts or the Deputy Commissioner may, if he sees fit, upon application of the parties, call for and revise the proceedings of the lower court.

Registration. The Deputy Commissioner is also the Registrar of the district, and an assistant magistrate in each subdivision acts as sub-registrar. A rural sub-registrar's office was established at Gauripur in 1902. The number of documents registered in 1903 was only 2,174, but even this moderate figure was not equalled or exceeded by any district in the Assam Valley.

Police. The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 2 inspectors, 25 sub-inspectors, and 243 constables. 113 smooth bore Martinis are allotted to Goalpara, and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and subdivisional head-quarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. The foundation of the police system is the village chaukidar. He is required to report all serious crime to the officer in charge of the police station within which his village is situated, to arrest persons committing such crimes in his presence, to collect vital statistics, to observe the movements of bad characters, and generally to inform his official superiors of anything likely to affect the peace and good administration of the district. In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, to furnish guards and escorts, and to serve all processes in warrent cases.

A list of the thanas and outposts with the strength maintained in each will be found in Table XIX.

Jails. There is a subsidiary jail at Dhubri with accommodation for 24 convicts, and a magistrates lock-up at Goalpara. The industries carried on in these jails are

mustard oil pressing and bamboo and cane work at Dhubri, and oil pressing at Goalpara. The jail gardens also afford occupation to the prisoners Most of the convicts were originally employed on extra-mural labour, but this form of occupation has been to a great extent abandoned as it was hardly compatible with the strict enforcement of discipline. Prisoners are not kept in these small jails for more than three months, and those sentenced to a longer term are transferred to Gauhati. Mr. McCosh, who was civil surgeon of Goalpara in 1835, states that at that time the convicts were allowed to provide their own rations, receiving a small allowance for the purpose, from which the more thrifty were able to save money which they lent out on usury. "Many of the prisoners" he says "lead rather a happy life, and considered themselves as Company's servants. They take as much pains to burnish their irons as they would a bracelet, and would not choose to escape though they had an opportunity."

In 1841, Mr. Robinson of the Gauhati College described the state of education in the valley as being "deplorable in the extreme."* He pointed out that, unlike the Province of Bengal, where every village had its teacher supported by general contribution, provincial schools had only recently been introduced in Assam. In 1847-48, there was one secondary and 9 primary schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress as on the occasion of Mr. Mills' visit in 1853 there were only 10 schools of **Education**

* A descriptive account of Assam, page 277.

all grades. 1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in Table XXI.

Year.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	No of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females.
1874-75	15	580	89	1,840	2,420	160	...	...
1880-81	10	535	96	2,387	2,922	153	8·15	0·37
1890-91	16	894	178	4,037	4,931	92	13·23	0·78
1900-01	19	1,401	230	5,827	7,228	64	18·69	1·33

High Schools. High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The boys in the lowest class no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools, in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed.

There are four high schools in the district which are situated at Dhubri, Goalpara, Abhayapuri and Gauripur. The first is a Government school but more than half the total expenditure is met from fees. The second receives

a grant in aid, and the two last are respectively maintained by the Rani of Bijni and the Gauripur Raja.

Middle Schools. There are middle English schools at Bilasipara, Bagribari, Manikarchar, and Dalgoma. The middle vernacular schools are situated at Sukchar, Patamari, Chhatrasal, South Salmara, Bijni, Atugaon, Putimari, Amguri, Goalpara, and Dhubri. Almost all the pupils in the middle vernacular schools in 1903-04 were, however, reading in the primary classes and for practical purposes they are little more than superior primary schools.

The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—(1) Bengali comprising literature, grammar and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), Mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, (6) Botany and Agriculture.

Primary education. Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is only nine per cent. of the total number. The course of study in lower primary schools includes Reading, Writing, Dictation, Simple Arithmetic, and the Geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made

to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes.

Medical. The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Dhubri. It contains 14 dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important of his duties. He also acts as Embarkation Agent, as Medical officer of the Jail, and controls and inspects the vaccination department.

Lack of sanitation in rural areas. It has already been suggested in the chapter on population that there may be something in the climate, the subsoil level of the water, or some other factor which for the present remains obscure, which is prejudicial to life and health, but there can be no doubt that the conditions under which the people pass their days are not conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from chills, which might

have been prevented by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses of the Hindus and Muhammadans are *buried* in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. Their are a few wells constructed by the Local Board in the large villages, but their number is small in proportion to the total population, and drinking water is usually drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital statistics.

Vital occurrences are reported by the village chaukidars in writing to the police, and the statistics, though admittedly incomplete, are less inaccurate than those returned from other districts of the Province. The reported birth rate and death rate worked out on the mean population between 1891 and 1900 were alike 39 per mille. In 1903, the recorded birth rate was 43, the death rate 33 per mille.

Causes of mortality. Cholera and small pox.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which death most often takes in the Goalpara district, at any rate according to the official returns, but so little

reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency, that the figures hardly repay examination. Most fatal illnesses are accompanied by a rise in temperature and the villagers are in consequence very prone to ascribe every death to fever. Epidemics of cholera from time to time producc a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent. Cholera usually appears in the police stations of Bilasipara, Chapaguri, and Agamani. The bacillus, thrives in the muddy banks of tanks and rivers, when they are warmed by the sun and moistened by the showers of spring. The disease is thus most prevalent between April and July, and again in November and December when the water is drying up. On the out break of an epidemic a hospital assistant is sent to the affected villages, and cholera pills are distributed amongst the people, but it is difficult to do much for their relief. Small pox also appears from time to time in a virulent form. The highest death rates per mille recorded from this cause during recent years were 6·1 in 1894 and 1·2 in 1895. The people appreciate the advantages of vaccination, and during the five years ending with 1901-02, 44 per mille of the population were annually protected.

	Cholera death rate per mille.
1884 ...	... 4·9
1886 ...	.. 4·9
1891 ...	... 6·4
1895 ...	... 6·7
1897 ...	... 10·4
1899 ...	... 5·1

The most deadly lethal agent in the district has, however, been the mysterious form of fever known as *kala-azar*. The following account of this disease is extracted from the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901.

"When first referred to in the Sanitary Reports of the province, it is described as an intense form of malarial poisoning, which was popularly supposed to be contagious. The Civil Surgeon of Goalpara rejected the theory of contagion, and in 1884 expressed the opinion that *kala-azar* was simply a local name for malarial fever and its consequences. In 1889-90, a specialist (Surgeon-Captain Giles) was appointed to investigate both *kala-azar* and the so-called *beri-beri* of coolies, and he rapidly came to the conclusion that *kala-azar* and *beri-beri* were merely different names for *anchylostomiasis*, and that the mortality was due to the ravages of the *dochmius duodenalis* a worm which lives in the small intestine. This theory corresponded with the observed facts to the extent that it admitted, what at that stage of the enquiry could hardly be denied, that *kala-azar* was communicable, the uncleanly habits of the natives of the province affording every facility for the transfer of the ova of the parasite from the sick to the healthy ; but the support which was given to Dr. Giles' views by local medical opinion was withdrawn when Major Dobson proved by a series of experiments that *anchylostoma* were present in varying numbers in no less then 620 out of 797 healthy persons examined by him. In 1896, Captain Rogers was placed on special duty to make further investigations, and, in addition to demonstrating various differences of a more or less technical character in the symptomatology of the two diseases, he pointed out that, whereas *kala-azar* was extremely inimical to life, the number of cases of *anchylostomiasis* that terminated fatally was by no means large. The conclusion to which this specialist came, after a very careful enquiry, was that the original view was correct, and that *kala-azar* was nothing but a very intense form of malarial fever, which could be communicated from the sick to the healthy, an opinion which was to a great extent endorsed by the profession in Assam, successive Principal Medical Officers declaring that, whatever *kala-azar* was, it had been abundantly proved that it was not *anchylostomiasis*. The suggestion that malaria could be commu-

nicated did not, however, commend itself to the entire medical world, and was criticised with some severity, Dr. Giles writing as recently as 1898 "—Dr. Rogers, like a medical Alexander, cuts his Gordian knot by announcing that Assamese malaria is infectious. In this he places himself at variance with not only the scientific but the popular opinion of the entire world." A complete change in popular and scientific opinion was, however, brought about by the development of Manson's mosquito theory, and Major Ross, who visited Assam, in the course of his enquiry into the manner in which infection by malaria takes place, confirmed Rogers' conclusions, and in 1899 placed on record his opinion that, as stated by Rogers, *kala-azar* was malarial fever."

Externally the chief point of difference between *kala-azar* and ordinary malarial fever lies in the rapidity with which the former produces a condition of severe cachexia, and the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy. Recent investigations have, however, thrown some doubt on the malarial theory. Certain parasites called Leishman-Donovan bodies have been discovered in the spleens of fever patients, and it is thought possible that they may be the cause of the complaint. The origin of the disease is obviously a matter which must always be open to doubt. Captain Rogers is of opinion that *kala-azar* was imported from Rangpur, where malarial fever was extraordinarily virulent in the early seventies, but this is still a matter of conjecture. *Kala-azar* first entered Goalpara in 1883, and produced such a rise in the recorded mortality that a special establishment was entertained to move about through the affected villages and administer medical relief. The disease was most prevalent south of the Brahmaputra, and, between 1881 and 1891, the population of the Goal-

para subdivision, which includes this tract, decreased by no less than 18 per cent. It gradually burned itself out, and since 1901 the mortality from this cause has not been high.

Other diseases. Dysentery, diarrhœa, and other bowel complaints are also common, especially at the time when the mangoes and jack fruit ripen. Many persons suffer from worms and cutaneous disorders, and venereal diseases unfortunately seem fairly prevalent. Cases of goitre are for the most part confined to the western portion of the district. The fevers of Goalpara are generally of an intermittent type, accompanied by headache, constipation, and nausea. The spleen and liver are congested, and, after several attacks, the former organ becomes enlarged. The Eastern Duars have always been considered to be extremely unhealthy for all persons except the indigenous inhabitants, and fever is also common in the Chapaguri, Lakhipur, and Dudhnai thanas and in part of Pratapganj.

Native methods of midwifery. There are very few professional midwives, and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help, and recourse is had to Heaven for assistance. A goat or duck is sacrified, and *mantras* are tied round the neck and arm of the woman, or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the absence of

medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother in such cases generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patients bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. If the labour is a natural one all is well, but if complications arise the case has usually a fatal termination. It is also probable that many lives are lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases.

Increase in facilities for obtaining medical aid. There can be little doubt that many lives are still annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment. But it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. From the following abstract it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 12 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 135 to 1,082.

Year.	No. of dispensaries	No. of patients treated.	No. of operations performed.
1881	4	5,474	135
1891	9	22,101	526
1901 (*a*)	13	63,747	1,072

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Dhubri, Gauripur, Manikarchar, and Goalpara, each of which

(*a*) Exclusive of the private dispensary at Abhayapuri.

had, in 1903, a daily average attendance ranging from 41 to 71. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, diseases of the eye, dysentry and diarrhœa, and rheumatic affections. The number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1900 and the succeeding years will be found in Table XXIV.

A professional revenue survey of Goalpara was made at the time when the district formed a part of Bengal, and maps were published in 1876. They are on the scale of one inch to the mile and in addition to topographical features, show the sites of villages and the physical features of the country. A smaller map on the scale of 4 miles to the inch was published in 1883 and brought up to date in 1893. A cadastral survey was carried out in the Eastern Duars, by local agency on the basis of a traverse by the professional survey party. The total area so surveyed between 1st October 1896 to September 30th, 1900 was 338 square miles. Surveys.

LIST OF TABLES.

Statement A.

List of Post and Telegraph Offices.

Name of post office.	Police station or outpost in which situated.	Pargana in which situated.
Abhayapuri	North Salmara	Khuntaghat.
Agamani	Agamani	Ghurlla.
Agia	Goalpara	Mechpara.
Bagribari*	Bilasipara	Parbatjoar.
Baitamari	North Salmara	Khuntaghat.
Bijni	Chapaguri	Duar Bijni.
Bilasipara*	Bilasipara	Chapar.
Chapaguri	Chapaguri	Duar Bijni.
Chapar	Bilasipara	Chapar.
Dalgoma	Goalpara	Habraghat.
Damra	Dudhnai	Do.
Darangiri	Do.	Do.
Dhubri	Dhubri	Jamira (Dhubri town.)
Fakirganj	South Salmara	Do.
Fakiragram	Bilasipara	Khuntaghat.
Garubhasa	Chapaguri	Duar Sidli.
Gauripur*	Dhubri	Jamira.
Goalpara	Goalpara	Mechpara.
Golakganj	Agamani	Ghurlla.
Jamadarhat	South Salmara	Mechpara.
Jogighopa	North Salmara	Khuntaghat.
Kachugaon	Gosaigaon	Duar Ripu.
Krishnai	Dudhnai	Habraghat.
Lakhipur*	Lakhipur	Mechpara.
Malakhaoya	South Salmara	Aurangabad.
Manikarchar	Manikarchar	Karaibari.
North Salmara	North Salmara	Khuntaghat.
Patamari	Dhubri	Jamira.
Pratarganj	Agamani	Ghurlla.
Rupsi	Do.	Parbatjoar.
Salkocha	Bilasipara	Khuntaghat.
Sidli	Chapaguri	Duar Sidli.
South Salmara	South Salmara	Jamira.
Tamarhat	Agamani	Duar Guma.

* Combined post and telegraph office. Besides, there are departmental telegraph offices at Dhubri and Goalpara.

STATEMENT.—B.

List of villages containing three or more permanent shops.

Thana.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION		
Manikarchar ...	Deara	4
	Kukurmara	3
	Manikarchar	60
South Salmara ...	Fakirganjhat	17
	Gathalhat	5
	Hajirhat	14
	Jamadarhat	12
	Mandarerchar	5
	Salmara	9
	Satimari	5
	Sukchar	3
Dhubri	Binnachara	5
	Dhubri	97
	Gauripur	88
	Patamari	6
Agamani	There are permanent shops at each of the markets mentioned in Statement C.	

Thana.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
Bilasipara ..	Bagribari	24
	Bilasipara	41
	Kazipara	9
	Kurshakati	3
	Lakshmiganj	15
	Phutkibari	3
	Sailmari	6
	Salkocha	8
	Sapatgaon	7
	Dingdinga	6
Guma Mauza ..	Natabari	14
Chapaguri ...	Batagaon	4
	Bijni	3
	Chamugaon	
	Garagaon	8
	Papragaon	
	Showari	3
GOALPARA SUB-DIVISION.—		
Lakhipur	Lakhipur	0
Goalpara	Balajani	4
	Deoli	3
	Goalpara	—
	Marnai	4
North Salmara ...	Abhayapuri	18
	Baraijirigaon	3
	Birjhora	5
	Jogighopa	3
	Kabaitari	4
	Kotashbari	3
	Malegor	4
	Pachania	3
	Salmara	4

STATEMENT.—C.

List of Markets.

Thana.	Place where market is held.	Days of week on which held.
DHUBRI SUB-DIVISION—		
Manikarchar	Deara	Sunday.
	Jhandanga	Friday.
	Kakripara	Saturday.
	Manikarchar	Wednesday.
	Pepulbari	Thursday.
South Salmara	Fakirganj	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Gothia	Saturday.
	Hajirhat	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Jamadarhat	Wednesday.
	Manirchar Nitairhat	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Sukchar	Monday and Thursday.
	South Salmara	Do. do.
Dhubri	Baladoba	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Binnachara	Monday and Thursday.
	Dhamsala	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Dhubri	Every day.
	Gauripur	Do.
	Kalurhat	Thursday and Sunday.
	Panbari	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Patamari	Tuesday and Friday.
Agamani	Agamani	Monday and Thursday.
	Chhatrasal	Do. do.
	Dhepdhepi	Do. do.
	Dimakuri	Wednesday and Saturday.
	Dingdinga	Do. do.
	Dumurdoho	Tuesday and Friday.
	Golakganj	Thursday and Sunday.
	Habibhat	Monday and Thursday.
	Kaimari	Tuesday and Friday.
	Kaldora	Do. do.
	Kherbari	Monday and Thursday.
	Khirpur Habibhat	Do. do.
	Mahamamarhat	Wednesday and Saturday.
	Paglarhat	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Pratapganj	Tuesday and Friday.
	Pundibari	Thursday and Sunday.
	Rupsi	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Sahebganj	Monday and Thursday.
	Sanbanda	Wednesday and Saturday.
	Tamarhat	Monday and Thursday.
Bilasipara	Bilasipara	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Bagribari	Monday and Friday.
	Fakiragaon	Thursday any Sunday.
	Kazipara	Monday and Friday.
	Lakshmiganj	Do. do.
	Sailmari	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Salkocha	Do. do.
	Sapatgaon	Tuesday and Saturday.
Gosaigaon	Gosaigaon	Tuesday and Friday.
	Chamugaon	Sunday.
Chapaguri	Chapaguri	Saturday.
	Garagaon*	Do.
	Garubhasa	Do.
GOALPORA SUB-DIVISION.		
Lakhipur	Avirampara	Tuesday.
	Chunari	Sunday.
	Jaleswar	Wednesday.
	Lakhipur	Monday.
	Nidanpur	Friday.
Goalpara	Balijani	Tuesday.
	Matia	Sunday.
Dudhnai	Damra	Thursday.
	Dhupdhara	Tuesday.
	Krishnai	Wednesday.
	Rangjuli	Monday.
North Salmara	Abhayapuri	Monday and Thursday.
	Barakhata	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Kabaitari	Tuesday and Saturday.

* Held only in the cold weather.

TABLE I.

Average maximum and minimum shade temperatures at Dhubri town.

	January.	February.	March.	April	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total year.
Maximum temperature.	74°·0	78°·0	86°·5	88°·7	85° 9	85°·7	85°·9	86°·0	85°·1	84°·5	79°·8	74°·3	82°·9
Minimum temperature.	53°·1	56°·0	63°·4	70°·7	73°·2	76°·4	78°·3	78°·3	77°·0	72°·8	63°·5	55°·1	68°·2

TABLE II.

RAINFALL.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn in brackets below the name of each station.

Months.	Average rainfall in inches.				
	Kachugaon (13 years.)	Bijni. (13 years)	Marnai. (12 years.)	Dhubri. (30 years)	Goalpara. (39 years)
January	0.56	1·89	0·49	0·39	0·43
February	0·74	0·72	0·51	0·55	0·61
March	1·99	2·35	1·62	1·86	2·22
April	9 26	10·46	8·65	5·01	6·76
May	19·29	18·38	19 80	16·14	14·05
June	33·13	23·68	29 58	25·28	22·30
July	36 94	27·52	32·92	16·71	16·66
August	24 50	17·87	20·85	12·18	11·95
September	21·25	21·37	21·31	13·32	11·54
October	5·47	6·37	3·96	3 75	3·91
November	0·23	0·25	0·08	0·14	0·21
December	0·26	0·15	0·11	0·14	0·21
Total of year ...	153·62	131·01	139·88	95·47	90·85

TABLE III.

Distribution of population by thanas.

Thana.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.
Dhubri	52,770	57,525	— 4,755	179·60	294
Agamani	89,836	84,592	+ 5,244	672·60	134
Balasipara	65,460	47,848	+ 17,612	545·60	120
South Salmara ...	62,921	72,443	— 9,522	365·00	172
Chapaguri	58,115	55,373	+ 2,742	1,102·00	53
Goalpara	31,256	29,788	+ 1,468	214·30	146
Dudhnai	31,111	28,380	+ 2,731	265·00	117
Lakhipur	22,201	26,208	— 4,007	277·40	80
North Salmara ...	48,382	50,147	— 1,765	332·50	146
Total district ...	462,052	452,304	+ 9,748	3,954·00	117

NOTE.—The figures for area of thanas have been revised since the publication of the Census Report and do not therefore agree with the figures in Provincial Table IV, Part II of the Census Report of 1901.

Table IV.

General statistics of population.

Particulars.	Dhubri Subdivision.		Goalpara Subdivision.		Total District.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Male.	Females.
Population 1901 ..	174,168	154,934	68,517	64,433	462,052	242,685	219,367
Population 1891 ...	167,273	150,508	69,356	65,167	452,304	236,629	215,675
Population 1881 ...	282,010		164,222		446,232	229,149	217,083
Population 1872	115,629(*a*)	109,007(*a*)	113,745	106,380	444,761	229,374	215,387
Variation 1891-1901	+6,895	+4,426	−839	−734	+9,748	+6,056	+3,692
Variation 1881-1891	+35,771		−29,699		+6,072	+7,480	−1,408
Variation 1872-1881	+57,374		−55,903		+1,471	−225	+1,696
1901							
Religion—							
Total Hindus ...	75,082	62,539	34,457	31,618	203,696	109,539	94,157
Mahapurushias ...	2,060	1,765	15,431	10,126	29,382	17,491	11,891
Other Vaishnavas ...	48,712	43,138	12,673	17,402	121,925	61,385	60,540
Saktists ...	5,916	3,284	994	526	10,720	6,910	3,810
Sivaites ...	2,312	1,828	1,413	1,140	6,693	3,725	2,968
Muhammadans ...	59,989	53,730	7,987	6,682	128,388	67,976	60,412
Animistic ...	37,862	37,795	24,873	25,088	125,618	62,735	62,883
Total Christians ...	695	644	1,118	1,038	3,495	1,813	1,682
Baptist ...	3	1	1,084	1,034	2,122	1,087	1,035
Lutheran and allied denominations ...	660	622	...	...	1,282	660	622
Other religions ...	540	226	82	7	855	622	233
Civil condition—							
Unmarried ...	94,843	59,060	37,947	27,235	219,085	132,790	86,295
Married ..	72,869	66,913	28,127	26,367	194,276	100,996	93,280
Widowed ...	6,456	28,961	2,443	10,831	48,691	8,899	39,792
Literacy—							
Literate in Bengali	5,978	248	4,363	188	10,777	10,341	436
Do in English	711	32	404	13	1,160	1,115	45
Illiterate ...	166,999	154,629	63,845	64,236	449,709	230,844	218,865
Languages spoken—							
Bengali ...	118,822	109,039	47,136	45,053	320,050	165,958	154,092
Eastern Hindi ...	8,374	1,874	2,238	432	12,918	10,612	2,306
Assamese ..	5,401	4,396	960	640	11,397	6,361	5,036
Bodo or plains Kachari ...	34,856	35,071	6,948	6,458	83,333	41,804	41,529
Garo ...	819	654	6,901	6,204	14,578	7,720	6,858
Rabha ..	2,023	2,044	3,903	5,579	13,549	5,926	7,623

(*a*) Includes Eastern Duars—males, 19,240; females, 17,807.

Note.—The figures for 1891 and the preceding years are taken from the respective Census Reports and do not include the changes effected by alterations in district boundaries during the intercensal periods.

TABLE V.

Birth-place race, caste and occupation.

	DHUBRI SUBDIVISION.		GOALPARA SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males	Females	Males.	Females	Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH-PLACE—							
Born in district ...	148,350	142,241	61,174	61,228	412,993	209,524	203,469
,, ,, other parts of Province ...	1,546	819	2,684	2,336	7,385	4,230	3,155
,, ,, Rangpur ...	8,011	7,005	458	137	15,611	8,469	7,142
,, ,, other parts of Bengal ...	11,709	3,385	2,614	484	18,192	14,323	3,869
,, ,, United Provinces	2,719	965	1,051	166	4,901	3,770	1,131
,, ,, Central Provinces	66	32	66	25	189	132	57
,, ,, Nepal ...	715	282	135	33	1,165	850	315
,, elsewhere ...	1,052	205	335	24	1,616	1,387	229
RACE AND CASTE—							
Brahmans	1,371	520	937	378	3,206	2,308	898
Eurasians	10	10	1	......	21	11	10
Europeans (a) ...	19	10	8	8	45	27	18
Garo	763	723	4,675	4,681	10,842	5,438	5,404
Jugi	3,288	2,897	3,616	4,003	13,804	6,904	6,900
Kachari	272	357	7,070	6,968	14,667	7,342	7,325
Kalita	1,877	1,493	4,321	3,363	11,054	6,198	4,856
Kayastha	1,027	517	271	151	1,966	1,298	668
Koch	3,239	3,088	481	331	7,139	3,720	3,419
Mech	34,883	35,204	1,921	1,752	73,760	36,804	36,956
Namasudra	3,061	2,752	545	312	6,670	3,606	3,064
Rabha	2,119	1,873	11,326	11,818	27,136	13,445	13,691
Rajbansi	44,491	42,180	14,255	14,859	115,785	58,746	57,039
OCCUPATION—							
Workers	Sub-divisional details not available				207,270	149,683	57,587
Dependents					254,782	......	......
TOTAL SUPPORTED—							
Land holders ...	30,351	40,237	1,233	897	72,718	31 584	41,134
Tenants	110,142	76,959	52,692	35,708	275,501	162,834	112,667
Garden coolies ...	326	184	233	116	859	559	300
Farm servants ...	3,357	1,159	617	212	5,345	3,974	1,371
General labourers ...	3,422	1,995	475	378	6,270	3,897	2,373
Fishermen	3,333	3,128	1,751	1,741	9,953	5,084	4,869
Grain and pulse dealers	715	4,374	360	235	5,684	1,075	4,609

(*a*) Includes allied races

TABLE VI.

Vital Statistics.

Year.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fevers.	Bowel complaints.
1901 ...	462,052	44·25	34·09	0·46	0·46	29·70	0·29
1902 ...	"	45·23	32·28	0·60	0·27	27·54	0·19
1903 ...	"	43·22	33·02	1·04	0·17	28·48	0·20
1904 ...	"	46·58	31·03	0·61	0·07	26·94	0·29
1905 ...	"						
1906 ...	"						
1907 ...	"						
1908 ...	"						
1909 ...	"						
1910 ...	"						
1911 ...							
1912 ...							

TABLE VII.

Crop Statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ..	72,353	76,979	563,952	490,610								
Rice ..	55,233	57,714	409,194	346,000								
Mustard ..	7,518	8,890	59,669	52,000								
Sugarcane ...	85	116	1,000	1,000								
Pulses ...	1,560	1,921	21,777	21,000								
Jute ...	486	780	25,000	26,500								
All other crops ...	7,471	7,558	47,312	44,110								
TEA.												
DHUBRI.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
Number of gardens ..	3	4	4	4								
Area in acres ...	1,167	1,173	1,173	1,173								
Area under plant } held by Europeans	670	670	670	700								
Area under plant } Do. Natives ...	..	...	...	..								
Outturn in lbs. ...	149,692	134,131	195,669	213,498								
Labour force ...	460	439	493	508								

NOTE.—So far as thes figures relate to permanently settled area, they are estimates only, and the figures for 1900-01 and 1901-02 do not include the permanently settled estates.

TABLE

Reserved

Name of reserve.	Area in sq. miles.	Character of forest.	1900-01.	1901-02.
			Rs.	Rs.
Guma	26	A compact block about 30 miles from Dhubri along north trunk road. The forest is almost pure sal intersected by strips of low lying and swampy ground. A few trees only are found associated with sal chiefly *dillenia pentagyna*; *careya arborea*, *sterculia villosa*; the low lands are gradually filling up with *machilus odoratissima*. The undergrowth consists mainly of *chrodendron infortunatum* ...	36,213	21,415
Ripu	235	Situated along the foot of the Bhutan Hills between the Sankosh and Saralbhanga rivers. Generally flat. Sal occurs on the high land between the rivers but is intersected by large areas of grass. The grass lands which have been successfully protected from fire are gradually filling up with soft woods. Khair and sissu occur along the Sankosh, Ranga, Hail, and Saralbhanga rivers	31,231	34,434
Kachugaon	66	A tract of land south of the Ripu Reserve made over to the Forest Department for the establishment of forest villages in order to supply labour for forest work. With the exception of a few sal clumps, there is no timber of value. The area was constituted a Reserved Forest to ensure complete Departmental control.	...	...

VIII.
Forests.

RECEIPT.

1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09	1909-10.	1910-11	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs	Rs.
6,078	19,011								
57,199	11,398								
523	639								

TABLE

Reserved

Name of reserve.	Area in sq. miles.	Character of forest.	1900-01.	1901-02.
			Rs.	Rs.
Chirang	234	Situated on the east of Ripu Reserve between the Saralbhanga and the Bhur rivers. The northern portion contains a considerable area of evergreen forest which has been little exploited so far. The southern portion is stocked with sal and with the exception of swampy depressions and water courses is almost fully stocked, principally with pole growth ...	14,397	23,988
Bengtal.	23	Is connected at the north-west corner by a narrow neck with the Chirang Reserve. Contains sal in clumps with large areas of grass. The latter is, however, gradually filling up with soft woods and sal along the eastern border. The forest is generally somewhat inferior in growth ...	331	826
Bhumeswar Hill ...	7	An isolated hill situated south-east of Sidli. Slopes steep. Highest point is 1637 feet above M. S. L. Contains sal both pure and associated with a few other kinds but more than half is grass land or steep slopes with bare rock	386	215
Bijni	196	Situated at the foot of the Bhutan Hill between the Buriai and Manas rivers. A large number of streams intersect the area, and generally have khair and sissu on both banks. Simul (*bombax malabaricum*) is making rapid progress and this will probably be the dominant species in time. Large areas of grass occur between the river beds in which soft woods are gradually making their appearance.	...	7

VIII.

Forests.—(Concluded.)

RECEIPT.

1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
30,392	31,338								
613	...								
820	...								
...	...								

TABLE

Fire protection and outturn of timber and

Details		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Area under protection	sq. miles	721	721	721	719
Area protected	sq. miles	632	689	704	719
Percentage	...	88	96	98	100
Cost	Rs.	3,526	3,611	2,901	3,207
RESERVED FORESTS.					
Area	sq. miles	721	721	787	787
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)					
Timber	cft.	228,091	324,916	260,022	322,426
Fuel	"	28,584	24,002	23,355	28,604
UNCLASSED STATE FORESTS.					
Area	sq. miles	630	628	556	558
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)					
Timber	cft	34,967	26,652	17,314	41,392
Fuel	cft.	25,664	22,082	18,200	21,136
Forest receipts	Rs.	90,407	96,279	1,02,484	72,633
Forest expenditure	Rs.	63,563	64,545	56,977	86,737
Surplus or deficit	Rs	+26,844	+31,734	+45,507	—14,099

IX.

fuel and value of minor forest produce.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE X.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee at selected marts.

		Dhubri.			Goalpara.		
		Common rice.	Salt.	Mati-kalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mati-kalai.
1880	2nd week of February ...	...	...	...	18	8	16
	2nd week of August ...	...	...	...	20	8	20
1890	2nd week of February ...	14	9½	20	16	9	18
	2nd week of August ...	13	9	20	13	10	18
1900	2nd week of February ...	16	10	18	14	10	20
	2nd week of August ...	13	10	13	13	10	14
1901	2nd week of February ...	9½	10	13	12	10	13
	2nd week of August ...	12	10	13	10	10	13
1902	2nd week of February ...	11	10	14	13	10	16
	2nd week of August ...	8½	10	16	12	10	16
1903	2nd week of February ..	12	10	16	13	11	16
	2nd week of August ..	11	12	16	13	12½	16
1904	2nd week of February ...	16	12	16	16	12	16
	2nd week of August ...	14	12	16	13	13	16
1905	2nd week of February ...	16	12	16	14	11	16
	2nd week of August ...	12	14	16	14	15	16
1906	2nd week of February ..						
	2nd week of August ...						
1907	2nd week of February ...						
	2nd week of August ...						
1908	2nd week of February ..						
	2nd week of August ..						
1909	2nd week of February ...						
	2nd week of August ...						
1910	2nd week of February ...						
	2nd week of August ...						
1911	2nd week of February ...						
	2nd week of August ...						
1912	2nd week of February ...						
	2nd week of August ...						

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158, and 159 ...	11	3	6	4	1	...		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ..	1	1	6	6	6	3		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396	1	..	3	...	..	...		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	18	3	12	5	4	4		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354 356 and 357	7	2	6	1	9	2		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	6	1	12	5	14	4		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395 397 and 398 .	..	...	..	...	...	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270. 281, 282, 428. 429, 430-433 and 435-40 ...	9	4	9	1	6	2		
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454 455 and 457-460 ...	76	4	118	19	93	8		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344 ...	4	..	3	1	2	...		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property ..	1	1	...	...	1	..		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379-382	81	30	144	40	116	47		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 ..	13	11	16	16	14	8		
(xiv) Lurking and Criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 ..	28	10	33	12	33	13		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	6	..	6	3	3			
Total ...	262	70	374	113	302	91		
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	3	1	2	...	3	2		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	5	3	2	..	2	..		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396	1	...	...	..	2	1		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	4	4	2	2	5	...		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357	..	..	3	1	4	...		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	7	1	2	1	5	3		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395 397 and 398	..	...	...	...	...	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-40	4	1	6	1	4	...		

XI.

and Civil Justice.

1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION—(*concld.*)								
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455, and 457-460	29	3	31	2	17	2		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344	1	1	2	1	1	...		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property		...	..	..		...		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379-382 ..	70	25	58	16	35	8		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414	7	6	3	3	10	8		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448	17	7	21	7	14	8		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	1	..	1	...		..		
Total ...	149	52	133	34	102	32		
DISTRICT TOTAL.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159	14	4	8	4	4	2		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	6	4	8	6	8	3		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396	2	...	3	..	2	1		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	22	7	14	7	9	4		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357	7	2	9	2	13	2		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	13	2	14	6	19	7		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398 ...	..	..	...	...	..	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433, and 435-40	13	5	15	2	10	2		
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	105	7	149	21	110	10		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344	5	1	5	2	3	..		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	1	1	..	...	1	...		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379 and 382	151	55	202	56	151	55		
(xiii) Receving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414	20	17	19	19	24	16		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453,456, 447 and 448 ...	45	17	54	19	47	21		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	7	..	7	3	3	..		
Total ...	411	122	507	147	404	123		
CIVIL JUSTICE.								
Suits for money and moveables	896		1,201					
Title and other suits	67		81					
Rent suits	197		169					
Total ...	1,160		1,451					

XI.

and Civil Justice.—(Concluded.)

1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.

TABLE

Finance.—

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02-	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue, ordinary ...	94,303	1,12,301	1,07,347	1,09,784	1,10,010
Land revenue, miscellaneous ...	3,883	11,690	1,785	1,375	12,450
Provincial rates	60,516	68,851	67,210	70 399	70,406
Judicial stamps	25,111	34 248	32 668	32,343	37.167
Non judicial stamps ...	13 045	12,147	12,128	25,029	14,993
Opium	26,938	13,521	12,998	13,630	13,742
Country spirit	17.232	29,454	32,800	34,830	40,921
Ganja	29,274	29,642	33,141	35,728	35 694
Other heads of excise	8,326	2,211	2,255	2,440	2,520
Assessed taxes	22,958	29,984	31,035	32,103	25,566
No. of assessees per mille ...	2	2	2	2	1
Forests	73,004	90,407	96,279	1,02 484	72,638
Registration	1,077	1,309	1,961	3,616	4,273
Total ...	3,70,667	4,35,765	4,31,607	4,63,761	4,38,380

TABLE

Miscellaneous

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
*Dhubri.**	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Elephants	8,750	...	...	10,850
Fisheries	2,336	1,657	1,224	1,498
Other heads...	604	128	151	102
Total Revenue ...	11,690	1,785	1,375	12,450

* No miscellaneous land revenue is realized in Goalpara subdivision.

XII.

Receipts.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09	1909-10.	1910-11	1911-12.
Rs	Rs.	Rs	Rs.	Rs	Rs.	Rs	Rs

XIII.

Land Revenue.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

TABLE

Land

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION—	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Temporarily settled tracts.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	68,029	68,720	72,574	45,756
Held on ordinary tenures	68,029	68,720	72,574	45,756
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	552	867	873	873
Area settled on 30 years lease ..	360	675	675	675
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	192	192	198	198
Total land settled under other tenures ...	1,020	1,020	1,012	26,701
Total temporarily settled area of subdivision	69,601	70,607	74,459	73,330
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION—				
Temporarily settled tracts				
Total land settled under other tenures	681	681	681	681
Total temporarily settled area of subdivision	681	681	681	681
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Total area under permanent settlement* ...	1,518,982	1,518,982	1,518,982	1,518,982
Temporarily settled tracts.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	68,029	68 720	72 574	45,756
Held on ordinary tenures	68,029	68,720	72,574	45 756
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	552	867	873	873
Area settled on 30 years lease ...	360	675	675	675
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	192	192	198	198
Total land settled under other tenures ...	1,701	1,701	1,693	27,382
Total settled area of the district ...	1,589,264	1,590,270	1,594,122	1,592,993
Total unsettled area of the district ...	930,761	919,413	915,561	844,514

* Subdivisional details of the area of the permanently settled estates not avallable.

NOTE.—The total settled area shewn in this table does not agree with the figures in the report on Land Revenue administration as this table does not include the area of revenue free estates.

XIV.

Tenures.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

TABLE XIV A.

Rate of annual rent per bigha of Zamindari land.

Name of estate.	Market land.	Homestead land.	Sali land.	Ashu land	Transplanted Ashu land.
	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
BIJNI—					
Pargana Khuntaghat					
Bijni tahsil ...	20 0 0	0 8 0	0 8 0	0 4 0	......
Other tahsils ...	20 0 0	0-8-0 to 1-0-0	0-9-4 to 0-12-0	0 4 0	......
Pargana Habraghat					
Krishnai tahsil ...	20 0 0	0-10-0 to 1-0-0	0-6-3 to 0-12-0	0 2 10	0-4-9 to 0-5-6
Dalgoma tahsil ...	20 0 0	0-11-4 to 1-0-0	0-6-3 to 0-8-0	Do.	Do.
Rangjuli tahsil ...	20 0 0	1 0 0	0-7-0 to 0-8-0	......	0 5 6
CHAPAR	20 0 0	0 9 6	0 8 0 (a)	0 4 6 (b)	....
KARAIBARI					
12 Ans share ...	20 0 0 (maximum)	2 8 0	1 0 0 (c)	0 12 0 (d)	......
4 Ans share ...	......	4 0 0	0 11 (e)		......
Pargana Taria (Gauripur and Parbatjoar estates)	......	4 0 0	1 0 0 (e)	......	......

(a) Same rate for jute land.
(b) Char land Annas 8
(c) Rate for cultivated land in the plains.
(d) Do. Do. hills.
(e) Rate for cultivated land.

	Gauripur estate.	Parbatjoar estate.
	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
Homestead land ..	3 0 0	0-10-10 to 1-3-7 (f)
Awal (1st class cultivated land)	0-13-0 to 1-0-0	0 8 4
Doem (2nd class Do.)	0-10-0 to 0-12-0	0 7 1
Soem (3rd class Do.)	0-8-0 to 0-10-0	0 6 3
Chaharam and grass land or 4th class cultivated land	0-6-0 to 0-8-0	0 5 0
Land under betelnut garden	4 0 0	......
Land under mangoe, jackfruit and bamboo	1 2 0	......
Char land	0 4 0	......
Marshy land ...	0 8 0	......
Laik patit (culturable waste) land ...	0 2 0	......
Gar Laik patit (unculturable waste) land	0 1 0	....

(f)

	Rs.	As.	P.
Awal ..	1	3	7
Doem ..	0	15	5
Soem ..	0	12	11
Chaharam ..	0	10	10

TABLE
Excise

PRINCIPAL HEADS.		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION—					
Number of opium shops ...	..	14	15	13	13
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	1,539	1,852	1,932	2,157
		md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Opium issued	..	6 6 0	5 12 12	5 34 0	5 31 0
Duty on opium sold ..	Rs.	7,011	6,064	6,669	6,584
Number of ganja shops ...	..	22	23	24	23
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	9,186	11,762	12,360	13,836
		md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch
Amount of ganja issued ...	...	26 9 12½	29 1 5	31 30 15	28 28 5
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs.	9,052	10,539	11,816	10,280
Number of country spirit shops	...	19	22	19	22
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	23,698	26,220	27,500	32,803
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty	Rs	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue	"	1,603	1,655	1,834	1,916
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION—					
Number of opium shops ...	...	12	12	12	11
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs	1,209	1,292	1,296	1,211
		md. srs. ch.	md. srs ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Opium issued	...	3 12 0	3 13 0	3 11 0	3 13 0
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs.	3,762	3,790	3,733	3,790
Number of ganja shops ...	...	12	12	12	12
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	5,826	6,190	6,502	6,912
		md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	...	19 19 1½	13 39 1	16 0 12	14 31 0
Duty on ganja sold	Rs.	5,578	4,650	5 050	4,666
Number of country spirit shops	...	5	5	6	6
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	5,756	6,580	7,330	8,118
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	..	...
Amount of liquor issued ...		...	...	...	...
Still-head duty	Rs	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	..	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	"	608	600	606	604
TOTAL DISTRICT—					
Number of opium shops ...	...	26	27	25	24
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	2,748	3,144	3,228	3,368
		md. srs. ch.	md. srs ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch
Opium issued		9 18 0	8 25 12	9 5 0	9 4 0 (*a*)
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs.	10,773	9,854	10,402	10,374
Number of ganja shops ...	...	34	35	36	35
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs.	15,012	17,952	18,862	20,748
		md srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs ch.	md srs. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...		45 28 14	43 0 6	47 31 11	43 19 5
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs.	14,630	15,189	16,866	14,946
Number of country spirit shops	...	24	27	25	28
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs	29,454	32,800	34,830	40,921
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty	Rs.	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue	"	2,211	2,255	2,440	2,520

(*a*) Includes 10 seers sent to the Garo Hills.

XV.
Statistics.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909 10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch	md. srs ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.
md srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md rs ch.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs ch	md. srs. ch	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch

TABLE XVI.

Income and expenditure of Local Boards.

Dhubri.

Sources of Income.	Income.		Heads of Expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	36,749	41,821	Post office	3,837	5,043
Police	3,981	4,501	Administration ...	203	203
Tolls on ferries ...	8,530	10,953	Education	8,657	11,702
Contributions	9,194	11,880	Medical	2,669	4,747
Debt	...	9,145	Civil works	34,779	49,900
Miscellaneous	358	903	Debt	...	9,126
			Miscellaneous	2,577	2,738
Total ...	58,812	79,203	Total ...	52,722	83,459

Goalpara.

Sources of Income.	Income.		Heads of Expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	23,805	26,974	Post office	1,217	2,363
Police	2,068	1,106	Administration ...	108	108
Tolls on ferries ..	1,334	2,133	Education	5,693	8,327
Contributions	7,365	14,040	Medical	2,611	2,252
Debt	...	2,313	Civil Works	19,311	34,185
Miscellaneous	98	224	Debt	...	2,420
			Miscellaneous	1,680	1,557
Total ...	34,670	46,790	Total ...	30,620	51,212

TABLE XVII.

MUNICIPAL.

Dhubri Municipality.

Sources of Income.	Income. 1890-91.	Income. 1900-01.	Heads of Expenditure.	Expenditure. 1890-91.	Expenditure. 1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ..	2,254	7,791	Administration ...	325	420
Tax on houses and lands ...	1,505	2,596	Conservancy ...	1,464	3,226
Pounds	670	508	Public works ...	1,704	1,383
Fees from markets ...	1,761	2,917	Public instruction ...	222	312
Grants from Government and Local Funds ...	750	1,500	Drainage	451	310
Conservancy ...	913	2,440	Other heads	1,963	3,646
Other sources	586	782	Closing balance ...	2,310	9,237
Total ..	8,439	18,534	Total ...	8,439	18,534

Goalpara Municipality.

Sources of Income.	Income. 1890-91.	Income. 1900-01.	Heads of Expenditure.	Expenditure. 1890-91.	Expenditure. 1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	1,678	810	Administration ...	266	733
Tax on houses and lands ...	2,237	742	Conservancy	493	1,628
Pounds	602	601	Public works	1,298	2,199
Grants from Government and Local Funds ...	500	1,000	Public instruction ...	325	298
Tax on persons ...	...	2,574	Drainage	182	103
Other sources	1,071	1,712	Other heads	1,772	861
			Closing balance ...	1,752	1,617
Total ...	6,088	7,439	Total ...	6,088	7,439

TABLE XVIII.

Strength of Police Force.

PARTICULARS.		1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.				
SUPERVISING STAFF.				
District and Assistant Superintendents	...	1	1	1
Inspectors	...	2	2	2
SUBORDINATE STAFF.				
Sub-Inspectors	...	6	7	12
Head Constables	...	30	34	27
Constables	...	171	217	225
Rural Police	...	621	717	883
Union and Municipal Police	...	6	... ...	... ..
Total Expenditure	Rs.	77,516	88,363	1,11,444

Note—Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XIX.

Police Stations and Outposts.

	Name of Police Station or Outpost.		Sanctioned Strength.			
			Sub-Inspectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	TOTAL.
DHUBRI SUB DIVISION.	Agamani	P.S. ...	2	1	8	11
	Bilasipara	P.S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Dhubri	P.S. ...	2	1	9	12
	Manikarchar	O.S. ...	1	...	6	7
	South Salmara... ...	P.S. ...	2	...	8	10
GOALPARA SUB DIVISION.	Dudhnai	P.S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Goalpara	P.S. ...	2	1	9	12
	Lakhipur	P.S. ...	1	...	6	7
	North Salmara... ...	P.S. ..	2	...	8	10

TABLE XX.

JAIL STATISTICS.

Dhubri Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	27·29	20·23	28·03
	Female ...	0·42	0·06	0·07
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000		72	nil.	nil.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...	Rs.	2,422	2,096	2,191
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoner) ...	Rs.	37	40	40
Profits on jail manufacture	Rs.	859	190	477
Earnings per prisoner†	Rs.	35	13	22

Goalpara Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	10·52	11·68	13·55
	Female ...	0·11	0·12	0·18
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000		94	85	nil.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...	Rs	1,374	1,386	888
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoner) ...	Rs.	28	30	25
Profits on jail manufacture	Rs.	112	649	399
Earnings per prisoner†	Rs.	16	60	35

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE

Edu

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.				
High Schools—				
Number	3	3	3	3
" of boys reading in High School Classes	86	107	86	101
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes	126	121	121	136
" of boys reading in Primary Classes	236	220	288	269
Middle English Schools—				
Number	7	6	6	5
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes	39	23	18	21
" of boys reading in Primary Classes	469	401	406	373
Middle Vernacular Schools—				
Number	8	10	10	9
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes	25	39	24	48
" of boys reading in Primary Classes	375	406	322	325
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
Upper Primary Schools—				
Number	15	15	15	16
" of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes	61	83	73	85
" of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes	451	435	407	422
Lower Primary Schools—				
Number	206	196	191	192
" of boys reading in three Upper Classes	(a) 4,924	(a) 4,697	1,781	1,707
" of boys reading in Lower Classes ...			2,607	3,162
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of Girls' Schools	10	10	9	8
" of Girls reading (whether in Girls' or Boys' Schools) in :—				
High Schools	...	...	...	...
Middle English Schools	...	...	...	...
Middle Vernacular Schools	45	39	48	30
Upper Primary Schools	35	29	21	5
Lower Primary Schools	356	315	291	310

(a) Separate figure

XXI.

cation.

1904-05.	1905 06.	1906-07.	1907-08	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

not available.

TABLE XXII.

Educational Finance.

Particulars.	No of institutions.	Expenditure on institutions maintained or aided by public funds in 1900-01 from.					Expenditure per head of scholar.
		Provincial Revenues.	District and Municipal Funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. As. P.
Training and Special Schools	5	121	648	...	...	769	54 14 10
Secondary Boys' Schools :—							
Upper (High) ...	3	1,243	...	4,767	5,035	11,045	27 1 1
Lower (Middle) ...	15	1,096	3,687	1,173	4,662	10,618	12 6 3
Primary Boys' Schools :—							
Upper	15	...	1,543	448	774	2,765	6 2 9
Lower	206	...	11,456	605	2,119	14,180	2 14 1
Girls' Schools ...	10	...	903	...	665	1,568	7 6 4
Total ...	254	2,460	18,237	6,993	13,255	40,945	5 15 5

TABLE XXIII.

Medical.

PARTICULARS.	Dhubri Subdivision.			Goalpara Subdivision.			Total District.		
	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Number of dispensaries	2	5	9	2	4	4(*a*)	4	9	13
Daily average number of in-door patients ...	7·92	15·04	24·69	7·29	5·40	8·92	15·21	20·44	33·61
" " " out-door " ...	31·44	92·84	265·68	23·50	48·71	84·76	54·94	141·55	350·44
Cases treated	3,230	15,003	46,875	2,244	7,098	16,872	5,474	22,101	63,747
Operations performed	93	408	843	42	118	229 (*b*)	135	526	1,072
Total income ... ... Rs.	3,354	9,953	17,397	3,350	7,691	8,539	6,704	17,644	25,936
Income from Government ... "	1,269	3,243	5,764	1,512	2,146	1,554	2,781	5,389	7,318
Income from local and municipal funds "	397	2,693	4,160	335	1,695	1,840	732	4,388	6,000
Subscriptions ... ... "	1,174	1,808	3,093	1,063	655	1,646	2,237	2,463	4,739
Total expenditure ... ... "	3,181	9,905	17,174	2,906	7,613	8,482	6,087	17,518	25,656
Expenditure on establishment ... "	1,826	2,991	7,035	1,914	2,074	2,034	3,740	5,065	9,069
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated	Subdivisional figures not available.						10·96(*c*)	33·19	38·67
Cost per successful case ... Rs.							not available	0 0 6	0 0 9

(*a*) Excludes the private dispensary at Abhayapuri where 2,444 persons were treated.
(*b*) Excludes 10 operations performed in the private dispensary at Abhayapuri.
(*c*) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE

Dispen

Name of Dispensary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Dhubri	6,792	11,213	6,662	8,917	5,581	8,892	5,286	10,015	6,241	9,881		
Gauripur	1,339	4,895	1,331	6,616	1,267	6,728	...	8,146	..	9,799		
Rupsi	875	4,170	842	4,810	794	4,210	967	5,320	898	5,156		
Bagribari	1,040	3,843	1,277	4,033	855	5,113	834	4,515	937	4,820		
Manikarchar	1,329	5,263	1,480	6,222	1,128	7,250	1,419	8,736	1,338	9,557		
Bilasipara	1,150	4,590	1,377	5,177	1,168	6,176	1,166	6,575	1,444	7,914		
South Salmara ...	1,459	4,437	1,560	5,621	787	3,864	938	4,800	1,068	6,867		
Agamani	884	2,776	1,025	3,653	764	4,455	1,009	4,508	1,152	3,764		
Goalpara	3,191	6,689	3,904	6,832	2,044	6,045	1,905	7,285	1,765	7,817		
Lakhipur	1,062	1,803	1,133	2,632	893	2,797	1,140	3,602	1,230	4,508		
Krishnai	995	3,361	1,397	3,730	1,057	4,545	1,688	7,800	1,082	8,624		
Marnai ...	1,071	1,434	2,049	3,678	774	3,778	807	3,914	875	4,069		
Abhayapuri	..	1,968	...	2,444	...	2,742	...	3,218	...	3,732		
Chapar	...	...	...	..	1,251	3,686	964	3,736	1,139	6,151		

XXIV.

saries.

1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
Total cost	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs		Rs.		Rs.	

INDEX.